Daily Report

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Palestinian Affairs

Delegate Assesses Talks With Baker

LD1403234691 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 2200 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] At the end of the bulletin, and as we said in the headlines, we now offer this telephone interview conducted by the national radio with [name indistinct] member of the Palestinian delegation who talked to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker.

[Begin Paletinian delegate recording] [passage indistinct] These are exposed attempts, which will never deceive the Palestinian people who consider the PLO the sole legitimate representative [words indistinct] the key to the solution and the key to peace is in the hands of the PLO, who alone can speak in the name of the Palestinian people.

We also told the U.S. secretary that the Palestinian problem concerns not only the Palestinian (?solution) in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Palestinian problem [words indistinct]. We asked the secretary many questions. We said to him you have finished [words indistinct] and Iraq. You killed tens of thousands of innocent people. Your aircraft bombed in a very concentrated and deep way a country whose area does not exceed the area of California, under the pretext of implementing international legitimacy. We asked him if Israel refuses to submit to the resolutions of the international legitimacy, would your aircraft bomb Tel Aviv and Haifa? Or would the policy of double standards, political hypocrisy, and speaking with two voices continue?

We told him that moving away from these double standards is also an indicator of his seriousness in seeking peace.

During our meeting with the U.S. secretary we also presented him with the issues of Palestinian suffering, the issues of the daily oppression which the Palestinian people face, the closure of universities, the wounded, the martyrs, the demolition of houses, the water problem, the taxes [words indistinct] the confiscation of land, the construction of settlements, and the fact that Israel has never adhered to or respected any of the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The U.S. secretary did not answer these questions. I think that the only conclusion the secretary came away from his meeting with the Palestinians in Jerusalem with was that he completely understood that the PLO is the basis of the solution and settlement in the region, that any attempt to overtake it is illusory and a dream, and that anyone who seriously talks about peace should immediately abandon these illusions and dreams.

I listened to brother Bassam Abu Sharif as he [word indistinct] completely. As the Palestinian people, we understand that we are now living in a difficult period, and that there will be many attempts to cast doubt. What I can say is that there is a peace strategy, a comprehensive Palestinian strategy ratified by the PNC [Palestine National Council] in its session held in Algiers in November 1988. This is the principal basis for Palestinian political moves. We are not talking about concessions or no concessions. We, as the Palestinian people, are talking about international legitimacy which should be dealt with as an integral indivisible part. International legitimacy is completely known. The UN Security Council stand on the Palestinian issue is completely known and the Palestinian leadership's strategy, which was submitted by the PLO, our sole legitimate representative, is completely known.

On this basis we will assess whether the peace attempt is serious or not. [end recording]

DFLP's Salamah on Iraq's Future Regional Role

NC1303090591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0800 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 13 Mar (INA)—Saji Salamah, member of the Political Bureau of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], has affirmed that the Iraqi people have proven their capability to confront the imperialist-Zionist schemes which aimed at destroying Iraq and crippling its political role in the region.

In an interview published today in AL-JUMHURIYAH, Salamah said that Iraq is capable of overcoming the current situation that has been imposed on it as a result of the aggression. He added that Iraq will play an important role in the future political equation in the region.

Salamah went on to say that the PLO and the DFLP view the battle waged by Iraq in defense of its land as inseparable from the national struggle being waged by the Palestinian people to obtain the . national legitimate rights, which were endorsed by the United Nations and contained in its resolutions. Foremost among these rights is their right to national independence and self-determination.

In his interview, Salamah said the present [word indistinct] political moves, which are an extension of the U.S. imperialist attempts to liquidate the Palestinian issue and disenfranchise the Palestinian people's rights, are doomed to failure. He emphasized that any attempt to ignore the Palestinian people's rights will not lead to stability, security, and peace in the region, and that any attempt to impose an unjust settlement not based on the UN resolutions will generate further explosions in the region.

PLO Welcomes Army Deployment in South

NC1503120191 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1000 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] With the 'Ayn al-Hilwah camp at a complete standstill as an expression of the Palestinian masses'

support for the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, a demonstration took place this morning including employees of PLO institutions, representatives of the popular committees, and officials from Palestinian factions. The demonstration started from al-Hamshari Hospital and marched through the streets and quarters of 'Ayn al-Hilwah carrying Lebanese and Palestinian flags.

Mr. Zayd Wahbah, Fatah's political officer in Lebanon, said that we are united inside and outside and that the alliance forces will not be able to harm us. He reaffirmed that the PLO stands in one rank alongside the sons of the resisting south. He said the PLO welcomes the deployment of the Lebanese Army in all parts of Lebanon. He added that the Palestinian forces will not aim their rifles at the Army but will fight alongside it to confront the occupation.

Cairo Paper Interviews 'Arafat Adviser

PM1203141991 Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 7 Mar 91 p 4

[Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, "political adviser to Palestinian President and PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat," by Jalal al-Sayyid; place, date not given]

[Text] [al-Sayyid] How do you view the Palestinian issue at the present stage after the guns have become silent in the Arab region? And how do you see the issue's future?

[Sha'th] Undoubtedly the Gulf war and what has resulted from it in terms of the thousands of Iraqi and Kuwaiti victims, the enormous devastation of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti economic infrastructure, and the revival of many of the black memories of the 1967 battle causes bitterness and profound pain among the sons of the Palestinian people and among all Arab citizens everywhere.

Furthermore, the aspects of might and sheer arrogance with which the United States deals with our region and the world raise doubt about the future and about the possibilities of an effective move to resolve the region's issues. Finally, the aspects of division that have emerged within Arab ranks weaken the Arab ability to confront Israel, which occupies Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese territories.

The Palestinian people have emerged from that catastrophe exhausted by the wounds resulting from the large-scale emigration from Kuwait, the dangers to which our people's sons are exposed in Kuwait, and the curfew imposed by Israel against our people over 40 days. It was a stage of real starvation, as the agricultural economy, including crops and livestock, was destroyed.

Despite this, the future should not be marred by the burdens of the past. Some positive aspects should be discovered in order to arrive at a better future and a just solution to the Palestinian issue.

[Al-Sayyid] What are the positive aspects and their source?

[Sha'th] Their source is the following: First, we have emerged from the crisis with the liberation of Kuwait slogan. This slogan was raised by the Arab states that participated in the Gulf battle, adhering to international legitimacy and the Security Council resolutions that demanded that Iraq withdraw from Kuwait. Those resolutions were backed by 1 million troops and the most lethal weapons of destruction to uphold the principle of not allowing the occupation of others' territory by force, even if they were brothers, and the principle of the right to self-determination for all people.

That represents a new start for resolving the Palestinian issue. The Palestinian problem must be renamed the battle to liberate Palestine from the Israeli occupation. The focus must be on international legitimacy in rejecting the occupation of others' territory by force and in giving priority to the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. No one can now claim that international legitimacy is ink on paper. Nor can the Arab states that fought for the sake of evacuating fraternal Iraq from Kuwait accept anything less than that regarding the Israeli enemy who occupies the Palestinian brother's territory.

Second, Europe has discovered that the new world order can always slip into huge armed military conflicts much worse than those of the old world order or into one-sided superpower hegemony.

Therefore, reviving international common action to resolve the local issues with an international dimension, first and foremost the Palestinian issue, becomes essential for Europe in order to play an international and local role in our region. So we will see Europe calling for an international solution to the Palestinian issue. This is because that is the only way to restore its role and bring back the Soviet Union to play its role in our region.

Third, the crisis has exposed the weakness of Israel's excuses regarding its security and its occupation of the 1967 territories on the pretext of guaranteeing its security in the age of missiles, modern aircraft, and weapons of mass destruction. Security depends primarily on politics, and borders protect no one. It seems that the United States has discovered this point in this war and ascertained the need to achieve a comprehensive solution in the region—a solution that would realize the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction from the region's states.

Fourth, undoubtedly the main positive aspect of any defeat is the role that its parties can play in the future. The Arab nation learned a great deal from the 1967 defeat. As a result, the Palestinian revolution was launched. And I believe that the main lessons which we have learned from that battle all call for building a better Arab future. This is in addition to the need to rely on the masses and their participation and to be aware of the

danger resulting from the absence of democracy, as well as the need to draw up sound plans, not allowing foreign hegemony.

I believe that the region has been moving toward these positive points for some time. There is affirmation from Egypt in particular and all the other Arab states, regardless of their differences over the Gulf crisis, that the Palestinian issue is the axis of action in the near future and that Arab efforts will focus on it.

We also hear statements from European leaders, from the Soviet Union, and even from U.S. leaders as well.

Then President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, President Yasir 'Arafat, King Husayn, and other Arab leaders appealed to abandon resentments and move toward Arab unity.

We see that the inclination in our Arab and outside world is now focused on the implementation of international legitimacy in order to resolve the Palestinian issue. In fact, the U.S. Administration itself feels for the first time that it is now outside the captivity of the Zionist lobby and Israeli pressure and that it can move freely to resolve all the region's problems freely and in a manner unprecedented on the U.S. scene.

As for the PLO, it is experiencing, just as it did in the past, all Israeli and U.S. attempts to eliminate the Palestinian people's independent identity and to overlook the PLO through futile solutions. The reality is that these attempts failed even in the most difficult circumstances, like those that followed Black September 1970.

The reality is that after that crisis the Palestinian people are going through a rare phase of unity, and there is not a single voice that can be distinguished with the aim of overlooking the PLO and its legitimate leadership under Yasir 'Arafat.

So what concerns us is the unity of the Arab arena and the move toward Palestine. If that is achieved, then there is no danger to the PLO. We feel there is a special role for Egypt, since it is the host of the Arab League and the most qualified of the other states to play a role in uniting the Arab arena. And our relations with Egypt and the Arab states have not been interrupted. The dialogue is continuing with Egypt in particular, and Brother Jamal al-Surani [PLO Executive Committe member] met with President Husni Mubarak and Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid, deputy prime minister and foreign minister. And our dialogue with all the Arab states has not been interrupted.

[Al-Sayyid] What about Syria?

[Sha'th] Foreign Minister brother Faruq al-Shar' met twice with brother Yasir 'Arafat in Tunis. Nevertheless, we are preparing for extensive Arab meetings and a special meeting with Egypt.

[Al-Sayyid] And what about the European states?

[Sha'th] We are in constant contact, and last week I met with the secretary general of the EEC Council of Ministers and the minister of state at the British Foreign Office. The talks were friendly. They were understanding of the issue's position and declared that they would not change their commitment to what was mentioned in Madrid and Venice.

[Al-Sayyid] There are some voices which believe that changing some leadership in the PLO could help achieve a solution!

[Sha'th] I heard such talk during my European tour. My reply to them was: We have three new faces and you can choose whoever you want from among them: Abu-Nidal [Sabri al-Banna], Abu-al-'Abbas [Mumammad 'Abbas], and Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]!

[Al-Sayyid] What plans are now proposed to resolve the issue?

[Sha'th] The only thing is that there is a move toward the Palestinian issue, both at the Arab and international levels. But there is no definitive view or plan ready so far. As far as we are concerned, our demand is very clear—the right to self-determination and to establish an independent Palestinian state.

Faruq Qaddumi Meets With Soviet Ambassador

LD1303194191 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] Brother Abu-Lutf [Faruq Qaddumi], the head of the Palestine Liberation Organization's Political Department, has received the Soviet ambassador to Tunisia.

During the meeting, the two sides affirmed the importance and necessity of continuing consultations, exchanging viewpoints, and coordinating between the PLO and the Soviet Union at all levels and on all issues of mutual interest.

Brother Abu-Lutf reviewed with the ambassador the escalation of the Palestinian Arab people's struggle and its blessed intifadah inside the occupied territory. He pointed to the fact that American attempts to belittle the role of the organization will not weaken the bite of the Palestine people and its fighting leadership.

Ambassador to Budapest Views Postwar Situation

AU1203153591 Budapest NEPSZAVA in Hungarian 9 Mar 91 p 3

[Interview with PLO Ambassador Hikmat Zaid by Csaba Szerdahelyi; in Budapest on 8 March: "To Divide the Arab Wealth Among Themselves...."—first paragraph is NEPSZAVA introduction]

[Text] The most serious and painful lesson of the Gulf War for the PLO is that Arab states that were previously

victims of Israeli aggression also fought against Iraq on the side of the coalition—Hikmat Zaid told NEPSZAVA.

[Szerdahelyi] We first talked prior to the outbreak of the Gulf War. Now we know that the war is over. However, does peace indeed prevail in the Middle East?

[Zaid] Only the fighting stopped, but many signs show that the war is not over and peace is still far away. The reasons and causes of this war are still there. As I see it, the current task is to start international talks on the problems in the area as soon as possible, and finding a just solution for the Palestinian issue should be given priority in these talks. Perhaps the United States itself had bitter experience in this war and this could urge the United States and its allies to find a successful settlement of the problems. I would call President Bush's latest speech quite hopeful because, for the first time in the history of the United States, a U.S. president expressed the intention to negotiate about the justified Palestinian efforts. I hope Bush meant what he said and plans to act accordingly. Of course, we do not know what possible secret agreements might play a role here. One thing is certain: There are too many forces interested in dividing the Arab wealth among themselves.

[Szerdahelyi] What countries could play a decisive role in settling the issues?

[Zaid] Of course, the American influence is clear, and obviously this will affect the talks. I would draw your attention to the fact that American arrogance could even harm the allies' interests. True, the fact that America is holding almost all the cards greatly contributes to this arrogance.

[Szerdahelyi] Is the PLO disappointed with the Soviet policy?

[Zaid] No! The Soviet position has been clear since 2 August; at most, we hoped their position would change at the outbreak of war on 17 January. However, one should also bear in mind that Moscow made great efforts to achieve a cease-fire. However, there is still too much secrecy around all this, and the world is still unaware of the real losses in this war.

[Szerdahelyi] Does the PLO have exact information on that?

[Zaid] I hope I will soon receive trustworthy documents from Iraq, complete with pictures, and I will let your readers have a look at these documents. I promise that!

[Szerdahelyi] How do you evaluate Saddam Husayn's role today?

[Zaid] Husayn still has a firm hold on power, and nothing threatens the Ba'th Party rule seriously. Naturally, I know about the disturbances of the Kurds and of the southern Iraqis, but there is no calm in free Kuwait either, although there are no longer Iraqi soldiers there. Why all this? In my view, Husayn will overcome the difficulties this time, too, in spite of the fact that he also has enemies now in the Arab world. However, Iraq has not lost as many weapons as rumored nowadays and, therefore, Baghdad could even play a political role at possible negotiations on elimination of strategic weapons.

[Szerdahelyi] Iraq was defeated in this war. Does this also mean a defeat for the Palestinians?

[Zaid] I do not agree with you because, taken in a broader sense, Iraq was not defeated completely. There is neither complete defeat nor complete victory in this area! The most painful lesson of this war for us is that Arab countries that had previously fought against Israel and never recognized Israel also supported the allies. The Palestinians, and generally the Arab people, will never forgive that.

[Szerdahelyi] Israel is ready to negotiate. Is the PLO also ready for this?

[Zaid] Why not—at an international conference, even under the auspices of the United Nations, where we could discuss the UN resolutions against Israel? It is now the moral responsibility of the world and of the United States to demand the implementation of these UN resolutions as firmly as they did against Iraq.

[Szerdahelyi] Is the PLO disappointed after the war?

[Zaid] Yes, to a certain extent, but the moral victory is ours. However, it is very painful to see that they succeeded in dismantling the Arab unity.

[Szerdahelyi] Mr. Ambassador! In January, you said that you experienced an anti-Arab mood in Hungary. What about today?

[Zaid] At that time, in connection with terrorism, some Hungarian leaders exaggerated this issue, and the press also supported this. Unfortunately, the situation has not changed much and, in my opinion, a Zionist lobby is to be blamed for that.

Official: No Peace Without Palestine Solution

OW0903102091 Tokyo KYODO in English 0950 GMT 9 Mar 91

[Text] Tokyo, March 9 KYODO—Any U.S.-led regional security scheme or partial Israeli-Arab agreement in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war will fail if the Palestinian question remains unresolved, a Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) official said Saturday.

Bakr 'Abd-al-Mun'im, PLO representative to Japan stressed there can be "no security, no stability, and no peace" without adressing Palestinian problems.

With a military presence and strengthened grip on production and pricing of oil as a "fruit" of the Gulf war, the U.S. would try to have "their own version of some kind of alliance and security arrangements" among some

Arab or non-Arab nations in the region, 'Abd-al-Mun'im said in an interview with KYODO NEWS SERVICE.

"They will try to succeed in this by all possible means, with their big stick and sweet poisonous carrot, but I doubt they will succeed (without solving the Palestine question)," he predicted.

'Abd-al-Mun'im said the PLO welcomes in principle U.S. President George Bush's pledge to solve the Middle East conflict in an address to the U.S. Congress on Wednesday, saying it reflects a worldwide momentum to seek a peace settlement after the war.

'Abd-al-Mun'im urged Washington to act on its words, saying, "We have bitter experience of the U.S. There is always a big gap between words and deeds."

The U.S. has sided with Israel over the past decades "completely and blindly" in every field, he said.

Asked if he finds the newest American call for peace a serious one, the PLO official said, "By words we do, but by deeds, nobody knows, only God knows."

He also warned that any partial reconciliation between Israel and any Arab nation cannot bring comprehensive peace to the Middle East, noting that the 1977 Egypt-Israel pact never led to a settlement of the Palestinian issue, though the document declared it would.

Israel, he said, has been against any Palestine peace initiative, even the current one floated by the United States.

Asked if support for the PLO has dropped since the war, Abd-al-Mun'im said no Arab nation can find the PLO's stance during the conflict "mistaken."

He said the PLO tried to work as a mediator between Kuwait and Iraq in their dispute last year and stressed the organization had no choice but to take an anti-U.S. stand.

The United States deployed a huge military force on Arab land "to impose its own solution, by force, by attacking Arab people," he said.

'Abd-al-Mun'im said the PLO sent a letter to U.N. Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other governments earlier this week asking for cooperation in stopping the reported abuse on Palestinians and other non-Kuwaitis in Kuwait.

'Abd-al-Mun'im said he contacted Japanese Government officials on the matter.

On Japan's role in the future of the Middle East, he said it enjoys an advantageous position because of its historical "clean hand" in the region's affairs.

Japan can play a "huge and fair role" to solve the Palestine issue and work for comprehensive peace in the region, he said.

Japan has its own interests in the Middle East, especially in oil, and a solution of the Palestinian issue would bring it benefits in construction and supply of consumer goods to the area, 'Abd-al-Mun'im said.

OPEC Affairs

Geneva OPEC Meeting Held; Positive Results Cited

Saudi Minister on Success of Meeting

LD1303231591 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2139 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] Geneva, 13 Mar, (SPA)—Hisham Muhji-al-Din Nazir, minister of petroleum and mineral resources and acting planning minister, has commended the great success of the OPEC conference which ended yesterday (Tuesday, 12 March) in Geneva. He said: This success is due to the state of the oil market under the current circumstances and the ongoing crisis. His excellency did not view the agreement as a new quota allocation or setting a production ceiling.

At a news conference in Geneva, he said that the agreement reached was at the level of production under seasonal marketing conditions and in the shadow of a serious ongoing crisis. He expressed his satisfaction at the Kingdom's production level which was agreed at 8.34 million barrels per day. He said: It is natural to allot that level of production to the Kingdom because of its petroleum capacity. He added that the Kingdom has contributed about half a million barrels per day to balance the market.

The minister of petroleum and mineral resources stressed OPEC's adherence to the 27 July 1990 agreement. He said: The importance of that agreement does not only lie in setting the price at $21 per barrel as a reference price; the agreement created the means to monitor the market, respond to variables within it, and ensure that there is no change to gasoline substitutes.

His Excellency Nazir noted that production in the coming months depends on the end of the crisis and the supply and demand situation. He explained that OPEC agreed to lower production to prevent the collapse of prices. He expressed the hope that the oil producing states outside OPEC will also adopt a similar reduction in production.

His excellency rejected the suppositions in a question about the possibility of Saudi Arabia's dominating OPEC. He said: "The policy of the Kingdom in that connection has not changed. It is one of 13 members and there is no difference between them. They collaborate with each other in their own interests."

His excellency added: "The Kingdom is one of well over 70 oil producing states. It is playing a positive role to achieve stability in the market." His excellency added: "But the Kingdom cannot take more responsibility that it can bear."

His excellency explained in answering a question about the relationship beween the Kingdom and Iran in the oil sphere that the Kingdom deals with Iran like any member of OPEC. He said: "The relationship is distinguished by cooperation in whatever serves the interests of the two countries in particular and OPEC in general."

About the Kingdom's floating stockpile of oil Hisham Nazir said that the existence of that stockpile was natural for marketing reasons. Oil must be near consumer markets, however, as the transport of oil from the Kingdom to the consumer states takes well over 40 days.

His excellency added: The rise in reserves was due to strategic reasons to face the worse eventualities when the war broke out. He said that the Kingdom will market the reserve judiciously as part of its production quota set at the last OPEC conference.

Replying to a question on the Kingdom's embarking on investment ventures in oil consuming countries, his excellency said: The Kingdom is endeavoring to stabilize the market and achieve a balance in it in a way that will serve the Kingdom's interests. The Kingdom will not embark on any commercial ventures in consumer countries unless it is convinced of their commercial viability.

Hisham Nazir said that the Kingdom has ensured the protection of its industrial installations from the oil slick in the Arabian Gulf. He pointed out that the slick will not affect the environment and marine life in the Arabian Gulf.

His excellency praised relations between the Kingdom and Kuwait in the petroleum fields. He said: We are offering our Kuwiati brothers whatever technical assisance we can. Kuwait is now being supplied with the petroleum products it needs, and the Kuwaiti Oil Ministry is now functioning in the Kingdom.

On the reservation by Iran and Algeria regading the recent OPEC agreement, his excellency said: The reservation by the two countries only concerns production levels, and not the agreement as a whole. He stressed that the two countries have promised to cooperate with the other members in implementing the agreement and achieving the objectives desired from it.

Reservations Expressed on Agreed Ceiling

LD1303174991 Algiers Domestic Service in Arabic 1200 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Report by Station Correspondent Fethi Saddi from Geneva]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Iran and Algeria have expressed reservations about the OPEC agreement. However, Mr. Sadek Boussena, our minster for mines and industry, declared at a news conference this morning at the Intercontinental Hotel in Geneva that the agreement reached by the OPEC Follow-up Committee is the agreement of the entire organization, and that Algeria will abide by its clauses with discipline as it has always done.

Replying to a question on the reason behind the reservations, Mr. Boussena said our reservations are about the agreed production ceiling, because we do not believe it is at an adequate level to achieve stability in the oil market and defend the price of $21, which is a reasonable price, decided unanimously by the OPEC members last July. This price is not opposed by consumers, and will be useful for them, too, since everyone is looking for stability in the market—the producers in order to guarantee a permanent income, and the consumers to guarantee the profitibility of their investments. However, Mr. Boussena added, the positive thing in this session's agreement is the reaffirmation—albeit theoretical—of the $21 principle. In light of developments in the market, it is certain that the price will be reexamined at the June meeting, Mr. Boussena added.

The minister also talked about the efforts deployed in the last seven months to preserve the balance within the organization in the climate of crisis and war. He mentioned the difficulties he had in reconciling his mission as chairman of the organization with his position as Algeria's representative. He pointed out in this respect that he will not seek reelection as OPEC chairman for the next session, in order to preserve the freedom to express Algeria's stand and views without embarrassing any members.

He concluded by saying that the main thing is that we managed to bring OPEC safely out of the crisis, although the effects of the crisis have not all disappeared.

Iranian Minister Views Production Ceiling

NC1303073291 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Telephone report by unidentified correspondent in Paris—recorded]

[Text] Following an agreement reached by all the OPEC members on reducing oil production ceilings by five percent, OPEC's oil production ceiling has been reduced by 1.2 million barrels per day [bpd]. This was stated by our Petroleum Minister Mr. Gholam Reza Aqazadeh, who is in Geneva for the session of OPEC's oil market supervising committee in an exclusive interview with the Central News Agency in Paris. He noted that during the OPEC oil ministers meeting which started Monday and ended Tuesday night, all members agreed on the need to strengthen OPEC, and that the talks among the petroleum ministers were positive.

He said that on the basis of an agreement reached during the last conference, all members have undertaken to reduce their production by five percent in a bid to reach a price of $21 a barrel. Thus, OPEC's general oil production ceiling is to reduce from 23.5 million bpd to 22.3 million bpd.

Our petroleum minister added: Within the framework of this decision, the Islamic Republic of Iran is to reduce its oil production by 180,000 bpd; the other members, too, are to reduce their oil production according to their oil production quota.

Commenting on the reentry of Iraq and Kuwait into the group of oil exporting countries, Mr. Aqazadeh stated that it appears unlikely that these countries will be able to resume their oil exports in the near future. The Iraqi oil minister did not attend the recent OPEC session and Kuwait participated on the level of its deputy oil minister.

Iran To Cut Oil Production Immediately

LD1303205191 Vienna OPECNA in English 1835 GMT 13 Mar 91

[By Touss Sepehr]

[Text] Geneva 13 Mar. 91 (OPECNA)—Iranian Petroleum Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh said here today that his country would cut oil production by 180,000 B/D [barrels per day] "with immediate effect".

In an exclusive interview with OPECNA the minister said Iran's production quota for the second quarter of this year would be 3.4 million B/D including sales from stocks and storage. Current Iranian oil output stood at around 3.6 million B/D.

Aqazadeh was speaking following a decision by OPEC's Market Monitoring Committee (MMC) Tuesday evening to reduce overall production to 22.3 million B/D in the second quarter of this year.

He stressed: "In general I must say that after the Gulf crisis it was a good meeting to have at this juncture with quite a cordial atmosphere... there were many things said about OPEC's diminishing powers as an organization but this meeting demonstrated that OPEC is sticking to its principles.

"We disagreed on only one point and that was the difference in our calculations. Our (Iran's) view is that a production ceiling of 22.3 million B/D is not conducive to a 21 dollar per barrel price."

However he said that "some of my colleagues" believed that the newly-agreed ceiling would enable the 21 dollar price to be reached in the second quarter. "I just hope that their calculations are right."

The minister pointed out: "Let me reiterate that we had no point of contention or disagreement in principle only in our calculations and evaluations....

He said it had been clear to him from the meeting that all OPEC member countries wanted to attain the Organization's minimum reference price. "All ministers seriously defended price stability and had a positive attitude towards the outcome of the meeting."

Aqazadeh noted that since the meeting had not been converted into an extraordinary session of the OPEC conference due to the absence of Iraq "we will give more importance to our next conference which will decide the Organization's policy for the next six months".

Asked about the international oil conference to be held in Esfahan Iran in May this year the minister said that many high-ranking officials including OPEC's oil and energy ministers, oil company executives and energy experts, would be invited to attend "in order to observe closely and discuss freely the relationship between producers and consumers and to get an insight into the Gulf region's importance in supplying oil and gas to the world".

He added: "This will give impetus to the idea of cooperation between producers and consumers especially after the Gulf crisis. I believe the 1990s will be a decade of cooperation and if we do not cooperate we'll have no stable market and the price will continue to fluctuate."

Concerning the much talked about dialogue between producers and consumers, Aqazadeh maintained that only cooperation between the two groups would give the market stability adding "it is not too late and I can feel positive signals in this respect. I'm sure at the next gathering the International Energy Agency (IEA) will look at this cooperation with a more positive attitude".

The minister said he first called for a dialogue between OPEC and the IEA in August last year stating that the Organization's member countries were "moving in the direction of cooperation".

Later, at a press conference, Aqazedeh told reporters that OPEC member states would return to their quotas as stipulated in the July 1990 agreement.

He revealed that he had held a long discussion Tuesday night with Saudi Arabian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources Hisham M. Nazir, who said that the Kingdom would cut production as soon as Iraq and Kuwait were able to return to their previous output levels.

Egypt

Ghali Anticipates Arab Recognition of Israel

TA1403154091 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1500 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Dr. Butrus Ghali, the Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs, says that after Baker's tour of the region, new proposals leading to regional peace negotiations are imminent. According to him, the first issue on the agenda will be the solution of the Palestinian problem.

In an interview with Cairo-based reporter Yehoshu'a Me'iri, Ghali said that he anticipates that Arab countries will consent to launch negotiations and to announce their recognition of Israel.

Replying to a question, Dr. Ghali said that, to the best of his knowledge, the PLO will take an either direct or indirect part in negotiations, whatever its leadership is.

Ghali Discusses Hastened Pace in Peace Process

TA1503104891 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 14 Mar 91 pp 1, 15

[Report on an interview with Dr. Butrus Ghali, Egypt's minister of state for foreign affairs, by Abraham Rabinovich]

[Text] Cairo—The Middle East has but nine months to grasp the opportunity for peace opened by the Gulf war or will have to wait "for another generation," Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butrus Ghali told THE JERUSALEM POST yesterday.

"The attention span of the international community in the Middle East is limited and without it there will be no peace process," he said in an interview. "The American election campaign begins next January. There could even be an international accident before that somewhere else in the world that would divert attention from the Middle East."

The astute Egyptian diplomat, "a principal player" in 1978's negotiations at Camp David, made it clear that the opportunity for peace now perceived in the Arab world was a function of international attention and not a result of some more moderate perception of Israel.

"We saw the UN successfully apply the principle that there can be no acquisition of land by power. The principle in the Palestinian issue is the same."

Butrus Ghali dismissed the Israeli contention that confidence-building measures between Israel and the Arab world must precede substantive discussions on territorial questions.

"I'm afraid that if we begin by saying that we will begin with confidence-building measures—blah, blah, blah—we will lose time, we will lose the momentum. If we are serious, on both sides, and there is the political will, let us begin immediately. The first step is to deal with the delegation of the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip."

He said in 1980 he had presented proposals to Israel for confidence-building measures toward the Palestinians, ranging from a freeze on new settlements to ending the ban on political meetings. None of them has been applied by the Israelis." [quotation marks as published]

Asked whether Israel's anxieties concerning survival in an Arab sea did not justify its demands for confidence-building gestures by the Arab world, he demurred. "I don't believe that. I've spent the last 14 years of my life dealing with it and I think this obsession with security has been very much exaggerated by the Israelis and has even been used to reinforce a bargaining position."

It was the Palestinian question alone that prevented Israel's acceptance into the Middle East, he said. "If you are able to coexist with the Palestinians, you will be accepted into the Arab family of nations." Just by beginning the peace process, Israel would see a marked change in Arab attitudes. An international conference was one approach to the peace process, but there were also others. "We must be flexible and pragmatic."

Did having someone as tough as Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir across the table make it more difficult to arrive at a settlement?

"Who could have been tougher than (ex-premier Menahem) Begin?" asked Butrus Ghali. "And look at what he agreed to—even Palestinian self-determination."

Shamir was now 75 and he himself, Butrus Ghali noted, was 68. "We're both getting old and this work takes its toll." The peace process has been stalled since 1982. "We need a catalyst," he said. "If (former U.S. President Jimmy) Carter hadn't made the effort he did, we wouldn't have arrived at an agreement."

Did he think U.S. Secretary of State James Baker would get the peace process started?

"What I think depends on the time of day you ask me. I don't know. But if we miss this opportunity, we may have to wait another generation, and who knows what will happen before that. We must not lose this momentum."

Musa Discusses Arrest of New Terrorist Group

NC1403224391 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1720 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Cairo, 14 Mar (MENA)—Interior Minister Muhammad 'Abd-al-Halim Musa has said that the number of people sent to Egypt by the Iraqi regime to commit acts of terrorism has reached 68 following the arrest of another group of these elements at dawn today.

He added that those arrested have provided details about the tasks they were to have carried out in Egypt,

and said that the Iraqi regime gave them between $500 and $1,000 each to enable them to carry out these tasks. They also said that the regime promised that they would be given more money after completing their mission of sabotage and terrorism in Egypt.

This came during a meeting with students of the higher institute for agricultural cooperation in Shubra al-Khaymah today to mark the 30th anniversary of the institute's founding. [passage omitted]

The interior minister did not reveal the nationality of the terrorists. He pointed out, however, that the Iraqi regime recruited a number of the Egyptians working in Iraq to commit sabotage after the groups this regime sent to Egypt at the beginning of the Gulf crisis fell into the hands of the security forces. He said that the Iraqi regime was holding the families of these Egyptians to force them to carry out acts of sabotage in Egypt. He also said that the Iraqi regime told some of these elements they could carry out their sabotage in whatever area was easiest for them, while it tasked other elements with committing sabotage against specific targets such as residential areas, Gulf airline offices, and vital installations in Egypt.

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Halim Musa said that some of the terrorists confessed that the Iraqi regime drew up plans that would enable them to return to Iraq after carrying out their mission. The terrorists also confessed that some elements were allowed to select their own targets. He pointed out that all those arrested have been referred to the prosecutor's office. [passage omitted]

Paper Criticizes Saddam's 'Gang of Four'

NC1503010091 Cairo AKHBAR AL-YAWM in Arabic 9 Mar 91 pp 1, 9

[Article by Ibrahim Sa'dah: "The Sharing of the Booty by the Thieves"]

[Text] The despicable thief has suffered an abject defeat unprecedented in military history. With this defeat, the dreams and delusions of the gang which encouraged him to commit his crime, supported him when he announced Kuwait's annexation to Iraq, and expressed its support for him by declaring "jihad" to defend him from the coalition troops have vanished into thin air. Instead of deciding that its wisest course lay in disappearing from the stage, we have been surprised to see this gang stage maneuvers and fabricate events in an effort to save its skin and return to the limelight, just as it was before.

The king of conspiracies did an about-face. The former staunch supporter of the despicable thief now, after the sweeping defeat, says he condemned the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait from the beginning. Likewise, he shed crocodile tears for the innocent Iraqi victims killed by the bombs of the coalition troops. In contrast, we have not heard him utter a single word of sympathy for the thousands of Kuwaitis who were tortured, starved, robbed, and killed by the "lofty" men from the ranks of the Iraqi Army. Immediately after the Iraqi ruler was brought to his knees, we were surprised to watch the king on television extend congratulations to the fraternal Kuwaiti people on their return to their homeland and also on the return of their homeland to its rightful owners. As for Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], the president of the state of Palestine, he was more clever and evil-minded than the Jordanian king of conspiracies. He cannot go back to his exposed position. He cannot convince any sane person that he was acting out of good intentions when he supported the invasion, lauded the aggression, and encouraged Saddam Husayn to continue along his march toward Israel through Saudi Arabia, Bahrain Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. This is why we have seen Yasir 'Arafat ignore the main issue and raise a new and malicious one in the hope that this will save him from his inevitable fate.

Since the moment the victorious coalition troops entered the liberated land of Kuwait, Yasir 'Arafat has been moving heaven and earth over what he calls "a conspiracy" against the Palestinian people in Kuwait. He has not neglected to contact a single international and regional organization to ask it to hasten to save hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from the "massacre" to which they are allegedly being subjected at the hands of the Kuwaitis at the behest of the coalition troops. He has chosen to provide all the newspapers, radio stations, and television networks that agree to carry his words with his latest information on the situation in Kuwait, information which allegedly confirms that hundreds of Palestinians have been killed there and that tens of thousands of others have been arrested and tortured to punish them for a crime they never committed.

The other members of the gang showed great enthusiasm for the PLO chief's malicious and clever approach in the hope it could save them, too, from their lot. Hence, the trumpets of Khartoum, Sanaa, and Amman have begun to echo the statements made by PLO leaders and to shed crocodile tears for the souls of alleged Palestinian martyrs and for the Palestinians who have been killed, dragged through the streets, tortured, and arrested inside Kuwait.

Some naive people in the civilized countries were concerned by what 'Arafat and the rest of the gang were saying. We heard about human rights organizations dispatching delegations to Kuwait to investigate the crimes 'Arafat spoke of in his statements and consecutive appeals. These delegations were surprised when they discovered that everything 'Arafat said was a lie, an allegation, and a fabrication.

They could not find a single shred of evidence to support 'Arafat's claims about the alleged massacre. They could not find a single witness who could prove that the Kuwaiti people are indiscriminately pursuing the Palestinians to beat them, torture them, kill them, or expel them. They found the claims that the Kuwaiti Government and people wanted to take collective revenge against all Palestinians in Kuwait to be utterly devoid of truth.

It is true that the Kuwaiti people are still shocked by the activities of the many Palestinians who collaborated with the Iraqi occupation and provided it with information about the Kuwaiti resistance factions throughout the bitter months of occupation. The Kuwaiti people, however, are not as brutal as the Iraqis or as opportunistic as most Palestinians. By any standard, the acts committed by the Palestinians against the Kuwaiti people, who had behaved generously to them and who had given them preferential treatment over the rest of the Arab and non-Arab guests, are treachery. This people has the right to bring to account all those involved in these acts—the opportunists, the agents, and the collaborators among the Palestinians—and to hold them responsible before the law. The Kuwaiti people also have the right to bring to account the non-Palestinians who committed crimes against the Kuwaitis during the Iraqi occupation. These sick people were not just Palestinians; their numbers include other Arabs and non-Arab nationals. I do not believe anyone can deny the right of the people of Kuwait to bring to account those who harmed them, to impose legal punishment on those who committed crimes, and to deport those who do not deserve to stay in a country they betrayed among a people they treated with ingratitude.

The issue, therefore, is not one of the massacre being perpetrated against the Palestinians as 'Arafat claims, but rather one of a people's right to bring to account those who violated principles, collaborated with the occupation, and plotted against the State of Kuwait's present and future. The important thing is that justice be carried out without discrimination on the basis of nationality and without allowing some to escape while others are punished. This was affirmed yesterday by more than one Kuwaiti minister.

Why, then, has Yasir 'Arafat concocted these stories and fabrications, mourning the defenseless and peaceful Palestinian people who are deprived of their homeland and of a solution to their cause and who are being subjected, or so he says, to the most bestial collective massacre at the hands of the Kuwaitis with the encouragement of the command of the alliance forces led by the United States, Egypt, and Syria?

The answer is obvious. The leader of the Palestinians and their sole legitimate spokesman—a designation he relishes—must know that he has burned his fingers and that for the world, and especially for the people and rulers of the Gulf—without whom the PLO's coffers would not have been bursting at the seams with the billions of dollars he and his cronies have invested in every continent and only a fraction of which has found its way to the people in the occupied land—he is now a spent force. The point is that 'Arafat's latest opportunistic posturing has infuriated most of the Arab, Islamic, and friendly states, especially those of the Gulf, and that the consensus now is that it is no longer possible to talk to a PLO led by 'Arafat. He and his cronies dread this wise and definitive decision to proscribe them and are using all the cunning and opportunism they can muster to prevent their not being deposed from their exploitative stewardship of the PLO. Toward that end, they concocted the tale of the alleged massacre being planned against Palestinians in Kuwait in an attempt to put the rulers of Kuwait on the defensive. The latter, meanwhile, have been emphasizing their concern for the well-being of their Palestinian guests and encouraging hundreds of thousands of other Palestinians to return to Kuwait so that they will be in a majority and then set up a Palestinian "state" within the State of Kuwait.

This is not to say that Kuwait is the only country 'Arafat is trying to blackmail. The other Gulf states, above all Saudi Arabia, have not been spared. For instance, in the wake of the capitulation of the despicable thief, Amman radio reported that top-level contacts between the PLO and Saudi Arabia had lead to a resumption of the financial subsidies withheld for the past few months. The Saudi Government, however, lost no time in officially denying the report and affirming there will be no contacts or talks with the PLO under its present leadership.

The gang of four must now be experiencing their darkest days. The news of the defeat of their chief, the despicable thief, was a bolt of lightning that thwarted all their plans and dashed all their hopes, after the gang had so smugly identified themselves with Iraq's claims against the sovereignty and freedom of Kuwait. The despicable thief made it worthwhile for the gang of four right from the beginning of the invasion and occupation of Kuwait! Just like a thief, Saddam Husayn did not forget his "boys" when he got his hands on Kuwait's assets and gold on 2 August! He gave each of them a share of the booty, with the promise that further grants would be forthcoming with every new theft! Fortunately, details about the division of the spoils have emerged following the liberation of Kuwait as a result of the testimony of witnesses and the confession of the thieves.

It is now known that Sudan's 'Umar al-Bashir received 1,000 kg of Kuwaiti gold worth $100 million from the leader of the gang! We do not know what al-Bashir did with his share, whether he split it with his cronies or bought food to feed his wretched and deprived people!

It has become clear that Jordan's king of conspiracies got twice as much as Lieutenant General al-Bashir in recognition of the numerous and "significant" services al-Sharif Husayn rendered to Iraq and the Iraqi ruler. The Jordanian monarch received $200 million worth of gold. Husayn was surprised to learn that the gold bars he received had numbers registered at the world's central banks. The king preferred to conceal his crime and ordered the "melting" of the gold inside Jordan in total secrecy. King Husayn was surprised yet again to learn that his men could not melt the gold without its losing much of its value. Hence, he was forced to send the gold overseas aboard a special plane to have experts in Hong Kong and Singapore perform this illegal process which requires a great deal of precision.

As for the significant services the Jordanian king of conspiracies rendered to the despicable thief, the most important is the following: the provision of Jordanian expertise to dismantle and transport the highly sophisticated electronic equipment and devices the Iraqis found in Kuwait and were unable to dismantle and transport themselves to reassemble it at "the Iraqi cave of Ali Baba." Moreover, the experts of the despicable thief could not transport and operate the American-made Hawk antiaircraft missiles they found in Kuwait. Hence, King Husayn dispatched some of his Jordanian officers who were familiar with this type of missile. Husayn's services to Saddam did not stop there. Many Jordanian pilots flew Kuwaiti civilian and military planes to Iraq.

As for Haydar Abu-Bakr al-'Attas, the prime minister of "happy" Yemen, he visited the despicable thief in the first week of December, carrying a message from his well-beloved President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih affirming support for Iraq and placing the capabilities and resources of the Republic of Yemen at Saddam Husayn's disposal. The gang leader welcomed the message with a great token of appreciation. When he boarded his plane to return to Sanaa, al-'Attas was surprised to see Saddam Husayn's gift preceding him onto the plane. The gift was similar to the one Sudan's al-Bashir received; namely $100 million worth of pure gold.

As far as 'Arafat is concerned, he was the first to receive his share of the booty, which was a bit more than the share given to al-Bashir and al-'Attas. This is to be attributed to 'Arafat's skills in blackmail, opportunism, and peddling the cause of the miserable and wretched Palestinian people inside the occupied territories.

As I said, the gang of four now find themselves is an extremely perilous position. The gang has been exposed, and its conspiracies have become public knowledge. Right now, the four thieves can demonstrate nothing but hallucinations and confused behavior in the hope that a miracle occurs and the gang leader uses the weapons of mass destruction he threatened to use during the months of theft and jugglery to recapture Kuwait, demolish Saudi Arabia, strike at the United Arab Emirates, sabotage Qatar, and wipe Bahrain off the map so that the gang can relive its past glories and its members can regain their lost position, leadership, and stature.

Wafd Party Leader Comments on Developments in Iraq

PM1303162091 Cairo AL-WAFD in Arabic
7 Mar 91 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Siraj-al-Din Says: We Reject Partitioning of Iraq"]

[Text] Wafd Party leader Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din has made a statement to AL-WAFD on the latest developments in Iraq which have led to the capture of some cities by the fighters. Siraj-al-Din said: We condemn these separatist movements and want Iraq to remain politically united as it was before the recent war. He said that the current internal uprisings in Iraq are the inevitable result of dictatorship, domination, and autocracy. That is what prompted these movements to exploit the weakness of the Iraqi regime after its defeat in the war.

Siraj-al-Din said that we should not lump Saddam and the Iraqi people together. Nor should the people pay for the sins of their tyrannical ruler. We will not accept that Saddam's punishment be turned into a punishment of the Iraqi people.

Concluding his statement, the Wafd Party leader said that the absence of democracy is the cause of the calamity that has befallen Iraq. And the only remedy is for democracy to prevail in Iraq and for a political system to be established—a political system that respects the Iraqis' human rights and gives the people the opportunity to express their opinions and to participate in decisionmaking.

Kuwait

Amir Returns, Thanks God for 'Restoring Right'

LD1403142191 London KUNA in Arabic 1407 GMT 14 Mar 91

["Urgent item"—formerly Kuwait KUNA]

[Text] Kuwait, 14 Mar (KUNA)—Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, His Highness the amir of the state of Kuwait, returned home today after about secen and a half months' absence as a result of the Iraqi aggression and occupation. The plane which carried the symbol of the Kuwaiti legitimacy landed at the Kuwait International Airport at 1645, corresponding to 1345 GMT. Upon appearing at the door of the plane, the amir raised his hands and thanked God Almighty for frustrating the aggression and restoring right to its owners.

Minister Expects 'Return to Parliamentary Life'

LD1403120291 (Clandestine) Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Doha—Dr. 'Abd-al-Rahman 'Abdallah al-'Awadi, has said that a return to parliamentary life is certain, that the government is still committed to the 1962 constitution, and that it abides by the recommendations of the Jeddah popular conference. He expected the return to parliamentary life as soon as possible once conditions are ripe from the security and organizational viewpoint.

In his statement published today in the Qatari newspaper AL-RAYAH, Dr. al-'Awadi said that there is no discrimination between Kuwaitis at home and abroad. He said that the Kuwaiti people are one people brought together by love for the homeland. No faction will be allowed to discriminate against the people and their leadership under any slogan.

He rejected the principle of pressuring the government, explaining that everything must be accomplished on the basis of concord especially in the postliberation stage in which the Kuwaiti people need cohesion after disunity and disarray.

He stressed that there is a comprehensive plan to compensate everyone who suffered harm as a result of the Iraqi occupation. Committees have been formed to determine the reparations to be demanded from Iraq.

Dr. al-'Awadi also noted the need to rearrange the Gulf house from the security viewpoint through coordination with Arab states, especially Egypt and Syria who expressed genuine stands during the crisis.

Shaykh Sabah Receives Dutch Foreign Minister

LD1403100991 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Television Network in Arabic 1951 GMT 13 Mar 91

[From the "Kuwait Message" program]

[Text] Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah this morning met with the foreign minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, with whom he discussed the latest developments in the Gulf region and relations between the two friendly countries.

Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir made the following statement:

[Begin recording] [Shaykh Sabah] First, before I speak about my country, I would like to say that my colleague the [Netherlands] foreign minister's visit to his highness the amir was a good one. My colleague the foreign minister discussed during his visit many topics, including regional security, the Palestinian issue, and what the Netherlands Government will contribute toward the reconstruction of Kuwait. [words indistinct] I can say that discussions were frank, and the Netherlands minister and his highness the amir's views on all subjects discussed were close.

Relations between ourselves and the Netherlands are not new. For your information, we have always sought the Netherlands' help, that is, in our documents, which are hundreds of years old and which we could only find in the Netherlands. [as heard] Thus, the relations are not new but old.

The important thing as far as we are concerned are the souls which have perished and which will not return.

The other thing which pains the heart is the burning of the petroleum wells. The issue is not just the burning, but the harm which will be inflicted on my country and on the region as a whole.

[Question, in English] How long do you think it will take to reconstruct your country, and do you think Holland has any role to play in this?

[Shaykh Sabah] First, regarding the reconstruction of my country, the issue is not material but technical. At the same time, I can say that the Netherlands has contributed much, officially and verbally. We will seek the assistance of the netherlands for the reconstruction of our country, as we will also seek the assistance of others. [end recording]

Japanese Ambassador Returns to Kuwait City

OW1403011591 Tokyo KYODO in English 0021 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Kuwait City, March 13 KYODO—Japanese Ambassador to Kuwait Tsuyoshi Kurokawa, who had been out of the country since Iraq invaded last August, returned to Kuwait City on Wednesday night to see the Japanese Embassy.

Kurokawa will stay in the capital for a few days to make arrangements with Kuwaiti officials to reopen the

Embassy. He will then go to Saudi Arabia for a few days before officially resuming embassy operations March 20 or later.

The envoy viewed the Embassy from outside and did not enter the building because of the possibility Iraqi troops planted bombs in the compound.

Iranian Embassy Reopens 11 Mar

LD1103085691 Tehran IRNA in English 0653 GMT 11 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, March 11, IRNA—The Iranian Embassy in Kuwait was reopened on Monday and resumed operation. In a special ceremony at the embassy the Islamic Republic flag was hoisted over the embassy compound. The Iranian Embassy along with many other foreign missions in Kuwait was closed after Iraq invaded the country last August.

Airline To Resume Flights From Bahrain 13 Mar

NC0803155491 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0710 GMT 8 Mar 91

[Text] Manama, 8 Mar (WAKH)—Kuwait Airways Corporation [KAC] will resume international flights on 13 March and operate 20 flights a week.

KAC Director in Manama 'Adnan Muhammad al-Bidaywi said that the airline will operate temporarily from Bahrain's international airport until Kuwait airport is repaired.

He added that there will be flights to Jeddah, Cairo, Dubayy, Karachi, Bombay, London, and New York.

Saudi Arabia

King Fahd Receives Thanks From Kuwaiti Amir

LD1503125691 Riyadh SPA in English 1223 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Riyadh, March 15, SPA—Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd al-'Aziz received a cable of thanks from Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti emir, at his departure from the [Saudi] Kingdom for Kuwait yesterday.

We do appreciate the support extended by the Kingdom to the Kuwaiti people, said Shaykh Jabir.

For his part the Saudi monarch expressed appreciation for the heartfelt feelings spelled out by the Kuwait emir and reiterated the existing deep-rooted relations between the Kingdom and Kuwait.

Paper Comments on Baker Tour, 'Peace Wagon'

LD1503101691 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 0750 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Riyadh, 15 Mar (SPA)—An 'UKAZ editorial today deals with the visit of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to Moscow which comes in the wake of his visit to a number of states in the area. The paper says his visit to Moscow has come to entrench the new line that is being pursued to find a settlement to the problems of the area, and above all the establishment of peace and security in the Arabian Gulf and solving the Palestinian issue. The paper adds that Baker told U.S. President George Bush in recent reports that the Kuwait disaster convinced all the sides in the Middle East of the need to achieve peace and security in the Area.

'UKAZ explains that from this starting point Baker's visit is seen as a search for a framework for collective international action to achieve a comprehensive and just settlement of the issues in this area. [passage omitted]

'UKAZ concludes its editorial by saying that the peace wagon is moving and we do not believe that history will forgive anyone who tries to slow down or hamper its surge forward.

Paper: Saddam's Allies Must Ask Forgiveness

PM1403171591 Jeddah 'UKAZ in Arabic 8 Mar 91 p 1

[Shaykh Abu-Bakr al-Jaza'iri article: "Repent First, Advocates of Reconciliation"]

[Excerpts] My feelings and conscience were moved by the Jordanian foreign minister's appeal broadcast by London radio and by his call for Arab reconciliation after the defeat of the leader of their vile conspiracy against Islam and Muslims, that is Saddam Husayn. That conspiracy was designed to destroy Islam and extinguish its light by occupying the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and then sharing it among the three heroes of the conspiracy, namely the rulers of Iraq, Jordan, and Yemen. The moment Almighty God thwarted that conspiracy the voices of the conspirators and supporters rose, condemning the United States and Saudi Arabia, weeping and crying over the occupation of the two holy mosques by U.S. forces, and issuing false and deceitful rulings urging jihad with the leader of falsehood, Saddam Husayn, to rescue the two holy mosques from the Americans' occupation and to purge them of the filth of infidelity and infidels.

And now that Saddam's bewitchment has ceased, his evils and lies have been exposed, and his deception is about to destroy him, the Jordanian minister is demanding Arab reconciliation. I do not know with whom he wants to reconcile.

If it is to reconcile the peoples of the adventurers and supporters, namely Mauritania, Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan, Yemen, Jordan, and Iraq, they have never differed, so he

need not seek their reconciliation. And if he wants to reconcile them with Saudi Arabia and those whom God protected against conspiring against it, namely Egypt and Syria, it would be vile and despicable to ask the latter to reconcile with them.

But the appropriate and right thing is to seek their forgiveness for those who conspired against them or backed the ones who conspired against them. But to say: Come, you whom we conspired to murder and make homeless but could not, because God protected you, come let us reconcile until another opportunity comes to pounce on you and realize our hopes of destroying you and replacing you. That kind of talk cannot emanate from someone who has a grain of reason or a glimmer of instinct or belief. How can they do that, when their hearts are locked?! These conspirators should first to turn to God in repentance and seek God's forgiveness. [passage omitted]

Thus I would like the Kingdom's Government under the custodian of the two holy mosques not to accept any reconciliation with those who conspired with and supported the conspirators, except after a truthful repentance, namely by applying God's book and the sunnah of his messenger. And by correcting their faith, observing the prayers, giving alms, promoting virtue, and suppressing vice. This is because friendship can only exist among believers, as Almighty God has emphasized: "The believers, men and women, are protectors one of another; they enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil; they observe regular prayers and practice regular charity, and obey God and His apostle. On them will God pour his mercy: for God is exalted in power, and He is wise. [Koranic verse]

Papers View Kuwait Liberation, Iraqi Unrest

LD0903172991 Riyadh SPA in English 1232 GMT 9 Mar 91

[Saudi press review]

[Text] Riyadh, March 9, SPA—A Saudi Arabic newspaper today commended the positive aspects of the international alliance, which have borne fruit galore after the liberation of Kuwait.

With the return of Kuwaitis to their homeland, AL-YAWM daily said the international alliance began considering the other problems rampant in the region. 'These considerations were undertaken by the alliance with a view to solving the region's problems and stabilizing its equilibrium.

'In fact, U.S. President George Bush described the much-heralded new world order as an international arrangement that would be boldly characterized by the pursuit of peace and quiet salutary diplomacy—a new world order that would regard the use of naked force and brutal aggression as anathema,' AL-YAWM said.

For its part, the Jeddah-based 'UKAZ commented on the current oppressive practices launched by the dictator of Baghdad against his own people after the growing civil unrest to topple the Iraqi regime.

The paper said never in history it happened that all people agreed in their rejection of a dictator like Saddam Husayn.

'UKAZ said modern history had never witnessed that a dictator uses chemical weapons to oppress his people and remain in power against the will of its people like Saddam Husayn.

The paper said the Iraqi regime was on the brink of collapse.

AL-BILAD, also published from Jeddah asked the head of the Iraqi regime to quit power in order not to expose Iraq to more crisis.

The paper said the Iraqi people were calling for help in view of the brutality of Saddam to quell unrest in the country.

AL-MADINAH called for the trial of Saddam and his collaborators before a world tribunal.

The paper said the size of the Iraqi conspiracy against the Islamic and Arab nation has been bigger than what we could imagine.

The paper said nothing can make the Gulf people forget their plight and bleeding-wound caused by the Iraqi aggression on Kuwait.

AL-MADINAH said the Iraqi aggression on Kuwait should be treated as a treason to the Arab nation.

AL-JAZIRAH daily gave high praise to the valiant efforts made by the custodian of the two holy mosques in successfully confronting the vile aggression so villainously launched against peace-loving Kuwait.

The paper went on to highlight King Fahd's leading role in championing the cause of right and legality.

It also stressed the brave stance taken by the Kingdom's armed forces in conjunction with the rest of the international allied forces in successfully restoring peace to the Gulf region, thereby upholding the high moral principles binding the international forces together.

AL-MESAIYYAH pointed out that the uprisings that have taken place in many Iraqi cities against Saddam's regime are a telling verdict against the tyrant who made them suffer so much tribulations for so long.

AL-RIYADH also lauded the great efforts exerted by the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz in liberating Kuwait from the clutches of naked aggression.

The paper also spoke highly of the great technical renaissance in all spheres of human endeavours throughout the length and breadth of the kingdom.

Non-Muslims Urged To Respect Ramadan Observances

LD1303154891 Riyadh SPA in English 1300 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] Riyadh, March 13, SPA—On the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan, the Ministry of Interior urged all kingdom's non-Muslim residents to respect the Muslim feelings by refraining from eating, drinking or smoking in public places, streets or places of work.

As Ramadan is a blessed month in which fasting from dawn to dusk had been imposed on Muslims, therefore all non-Muslim residents are expected to respect the feelings of Muslims by refraining from eating, drinking or smoking in public through the entire month of Ramadan.

The ministry's statement urged all non-Muslim residents to respect the sanctity of the Islamic rituals and to abide by regulations prevailing in the kingdom. Any person whatsoever found guilty of violating this order will be dismissed from his post and deported.

The statement urged establishments, companies and individuals to understand the text of this statement and to explain it to their employees.

United Arab Emirates

Air Force Squadron Returns From Gulf Campaign

NC1103125091 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1205 GMT 11 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Abu Dhabi, 11 Mar (WAKH)—An Air Force squadron that participated in the liberation of the State of Kuwait returned to the United Arab Emirates today. A ceremony attended by senior Armed Forces officers welcomed the Air Force unit on its return. [passage omitted]

National Airline To Resume Syrian Flights 19 Mar

NC1503084591 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0525 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Dubayy, 14 Mar [date as received] (Wakh)—The Emirates Airlines Company has announced that it will resume its flights to Damascus as of 19 March.

The company will fly to the Syrian capital twice weekly—every Tuesday and Thursday—until 2 April, after which it will fly every Tuesday and Saturday.

The company will also triple its flights to Manila during 1991. It will operate a third weekly flight to the Philippines capital via Bangkok as of 23 April. As of 1 July, the company will operate another three weekly flights to the Philippines, bringing the total to six flights weekly. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Salih Receives Gorbachev Message on Gulf Situation

EA1303185291 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 1500 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council, has received a message from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev concerning the developments witnessed by the region in the light of the results of the Gulf war, consultations on making security arrangements for the region, and the efforts exerted to give an impetus to the peace process and solve the zionist-Arab dispute, in addition to issues concerning relations between the two friendly countries.

The message was conveyed by Veniamin Popov, the Soviet ambassador in our country, when the brother chairman received him at noon today at the Republican Palace in Taizz.

Salih Says Constitution 'Already' Approved

EA1403203291 Aden Domestic Service in Arabic 2030 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] Brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, chairman of the Presidential Council, today in Taizz met brother officials of executive, judicial, and security organs; the leaderships of the General People's Congress, the Yemeni Socialist Party, and other political organizations; and shaykhs and public figures of Taizz Governorate.

The brother chairman made a speech that dealt with a number of issues concerning the march of national construction and the latest developments in the Arab arena. At the beginning of his speech, the brother chairman dealt with the issue of the referendum on the Constitution, explaining that the leadership had responded to the Council of Representatives' decision to submit the Constitution to a popular referendum. He called on citizens to register themselves in the constituencies for the referendum and obtain a registration certificate to participate in the referendum on the Constituion.

The brother chairman said the Constitution had already been approved by the then Supreme People's Council in Aden and Consultative Council in Sanaa. This meant the Constitution was regarded as having been approved and that the referendum on the Constitution was a political and procedural act. All the legislations and laws that had been issued under the united state were in the light of the Constitution and no law was issued except in accordance with the Constitution of the Yemeni Republic. By this Constitution, we ended two constitutions and two systems and set up a republican system.

Former Vice President Predicts 'Bloody Explosion'

PM1103094191 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 6 Mar 91 p 5

[Interview with Dr. 'Abd-al-Rahman al-Baydani, former Yemeni vice president, by Mahmud Sadiq in Cairo; date not given]

[Excerpts] [Sadiq] Observers are noting the Yemeni opposition's growing role in the recent period at both the internal level and with regard to the expelled or exiled leaderships. As a politician and influential man in Yemen, what is your attitude to these movements?

[Al-Baydani] I would like to explain my political position: I am just an Arab Yemeni thinker proposing ideas which I believe can realize the Yemeni people's interests. And through the realization of their interests that are consistent with the interests of the other Arab peoples the Arab nation's interests can be realized. That is, I do not speak in the Yemeni opposition's name. Nor do I know for certain whether there are actually opposition organizations aiming to change the regime. All I know is that the majority of the Yemeni people are currently suffering from huge problems as a result of the ruling leadership's erroneous policy, be it at the internal, Arab, or international level.

What I do know is that the Yemeni people's sufferings have worsened since the Yemeni leadership linked itself with the Iraqi Ba'thist conspiracy in the Gulf. As a result, the people's inclination to topple the present leadership has grown. And since the Yemeni peoples are armed and all types of light and heavy arms are spread among them, especially among tribes, and these are the striking power in Yemen, the situation bodes of armed popular conflicts as they reject the continuation of the present regime.

That situation prompted me to call for general elections in Yemen to elect a parliamentary council whose task would be to choose the political leadership, a permanent constitution, and laws that reflect the people's true interests and traditions in the light of international developments so that Yemen can rise up in a civilized way and avert a phase of bloody conflict stage, which is on its way to Yemen. Such general elections can only be free if they are held under a transitional government and Arab and international supervision, just as Pakistan did last year when it held elections under international supervision. [passage omitted]

[Sadiq] Excuse me, all that existed before the Gulf crisis. But what is new that caused you to fear the possibility of a bloody explosion in the internal conditions at this stage?

[Al-Baydani] With the spread of administrative corruption, political domination, and the worsening of the economic crisis, which started some years before the Gulf incidents but worsened after it due to the severance of economic relations and the suspension of the financial aid provided to Yemen by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, in addition to the return of more than 1 million Yemenis from Saudi Arabia as a result of the Yemeni Government's participation in the Gulf conspiracy, all this has actually ignited the fuse of the explosion in Yemen.

Add to that the fact that those concerned with arranging a security system for the Arabian Peninsula have dropped Yemen from their considerations because they have discovered that Yemen with its present situation has become a source of trouble, insecurity, and aggression against neighboring peoples instead of becoming a factor of stability.

This is evidenced by the reports about the electrification of the Yemeni-Saudi borders. This means that the Yemeni crisis has reached its peak and there is no room to correct Yemen's position except by changing the present ruling Yemeni leadership, which is responsible for all these fatal mistakes which by no means reflect true Yemeni feelings or realize Yemeni interests. [passage omitted]

Airlines To Reinstate Flights to Cairo 14 Mar

NC1003153991 Cairo MENA in English 1450 GMT 10 Mar 91

[Text] Cairo, March 10 (MENA)—The Yemeni Airlines will begin on Thursday [14 March] operating its regular flights from Sanaa to Cairo and back at the rate of two flights weekly.

A Yemeni Airlines official said that the decision was made in view of the world insurance companies writing off insurance fees imposed on Yemeni planes and airports after the liberation of Kuwait.

The official added that the number of flights could be increased in case there were more passengers desiring to travel between Sanaa and Cairo.

Information Ministry Denies Clashes in Baghdad

NC1403125891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1240 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 14 Mar (INA)--An official source in the Iraqi Information Ministry has denied reports carried by suspect media on clashes between Iraqi military personnel and demonstrators in Baghdad.

In a statement to INA, the source described these reports as fabricated, groundless, and completely untrue. The source said that these media have been fabricating and disseminating lies within the context of an aggressive campaign launched by the circles hostile to Iraq and its steadfast people.

Syria, Iran Report Antigovernment Battles

'Massive Demonstrations' Claimed

NC1403203291 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1915 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] The Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI] today emphasized that according to news reports from Iraq there were massive demonstrations today in al-Nu'maniyah, with protestors attacking government departments and taking full control of the city.

There were massive demonstrations in al-Kut, during which protestors engaged forces of the Iraqi regime.

In al-Hallah the masses launched a major assault on the al-Mahawil camp near the city last Monday, engaging the occupants of the camp in a bloody battle which is still going on.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Action Organization in Iraq said in a statement distributed in Damascus today that the Karbala' masses scored successes against the Iraqi regime, downing a helicopter and capturing secret documents including a plan to bomb the city. The statement said the people seized munition depots including surface-to-surface misslies and chemical weapons. It indicated that many officers had surrendered to forces of the popular uprising.

The statement added that the revolutionaries in al-Basrah are closing in on Hasan 'Abd- al-Majid, interior minister of the Iraqi regime, who has taken shelter in a fortified position under the al-Basrah Sheraton where he established his headquarters. The statement said the Iraqi regime's forces in al-Basrah have begun using defenseless women and children as human shields to forestall the advance of the forces of the popular uprising.

'Fierce' Clashes Continue in North, South

LD1503112191 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] The latest reports from Iraq state that fierce battles continue to rage in the cities of al-Mawsil, Dahuk, Kani-Masi, Shaykhan, Batunah, 'Asid, 'Aqra', Shilaha Dizah, Dayluk, Suwara Tuka, and several other regions. In the course of these battles, 4,000 prisoners kept captive by the Ba'thist forces of Iraq were freed. Heavy casualties and damages have been inflicted on the Ba'thist forces of Iraq.

Meanwhile, refugees arriving in Iranian territory from al-Basrah have said that during fierce encounters between the people and the Ba'thist forces of Iraq as many as 15 tanks belonging to Ba'thists were destroyed, blocking their advance to al-Basrah via al-Zubayr.

The same refugees added that the 802d infantry brigade, stationed in the north of al-Basrah and commanded by Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Razzaq, has joined the popular forces.

Iraqi Refugees Report Clashes, Starvation Deaths

LD1403120991 Tehran IRNA in English 1046 GMT 14 Mar 91

[All place names as received]

[Text] Avaz, Khuzestan Prov., March 14, IRNA—Bloody clashes continue between popular and Iraqi Ba'thist forces in various southern cities of the country.

According to Iraqi refugees who have arrived here recently a large number of tanks have been seized by Muslim Iraqis in al-Basrah, al-Tannumah, Haretha, al-'Amarah, Qaryat, al-Aziz and a great number of army personnel have joined the popular forces.

Forces loyal to the Iraqi president continue shelling residential areas as a result of which several houses and mosques have been destroyed and a large number of people have been killed or wounded.

According to those who have arrived in the Iranian border city of Bostan on Wednesday, many who were stranded in Iraq's Majnun Island while trying to cross into Iran had to survive on reeds. They also had to hide in bunkers left from the 1980-88 war to escape the Iraqi Government forces attacks, the refugees said.

Meanwhile, sources of Iraqi popular forces said that several people have died of hunger so far.

A Red Crescent relief worker told IRNA Wednesday that a group of Iraqis who had crossed into Iran and were stranded in Hur al-Azim areas were transfered to a camp in Bostan.

He said that due to unfavourable weather conditions and recent rainfalls, Iraqi refugees endure a great deal of hardship in order to cross into Iran and said that women, children and the elderly are even in worse condition.

Popular Forces Reportedly Take 10 Cities

LD1403182791 Tehran IRNA in English 1749 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, Mar. 14, IRNA—Popular forces fighting pro-government Army units in Iraq have wrested control

of 10 more cities in the northern province of Dahuk, a spokesman for Iraq's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) claimed on Thursday.

Bekker Fattah told IRNA that "with the liberation of the 10 cities including Dahuk, 90 percent of the Kurdish populated governorate has come under control of popular forces." He said opposition forces were now trying to free Zakho town from government forces.

According to the PUK spokesman, "Down south, the people of Jalula in Diyala Governorate beat back a counterattack of government forces to capture the town Thursday morning, inflicting casualties and seizing a large number of weapons. The commander of the attacking forces was also killed."

On the situation of oil-city of Karkuk in northeastern Iraq, he said heavy fighting was raging on with people holding the upper hand.

The opposition has also claimed success in the central city of al-Hilla and its districts, where reportedly more army units including officers have defected to the people's side.

Kurdish Radio Reports on Clashes

Jalula Said Liberated

NC1403200391 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1700 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Excerpts] We have received the following from the Jalula axis:

In a desperate attempt by the 'Aflaqite enemy forces to control some positions near the city of Klar and to recapture it from the grip of the masses of the uprising, the armed revolutionaries, and heroic peshmergas, an enemy force consisting of three tanks and infantry forces launched an attack toward Klar before noon today, 14 March. The brave revolutionaries of our Kurdish people confronted these forces and waged a violent battle that resulted in the defeat of the enemy personnel. The enemy tanks were seized and their crews were arrested. [passage omitted]

Following the swift defeat of the enemy forces, the heroic forces of the peshmergas and the armed revolutionaries continued to implement their victory and pursued the enemy toward the city of Jalula from many directions. The brave forces of our Kurdish people were able to liberate the city of Jalula in an epic battle. Our revolutionaries seized four tanks and destroyed many others. The commander of the enemy forces was killed in the battle that is still being waged in favor of our forces outside the liberated city of Jalula. The forces of our Kurdish people and the masses of the uprising continued their victory in this axis and moved toward the enemy position.

The enemy forces commander who was killed in the battle is Major Khalaf 'Ali Salih 'Ali al-Jubuli, whose identification card number is 2,073.

Thus, Jalula has joined its sister Khanaqin where 'Izzat [Ibrahim] al-Duri claimed that he visited and met with the military commanders. Another important city has fallen into the hands of the masses of uprising, the armed revolutionaries, and the heroic peshmergas. [passage omitted]

Irbil Governorate Said Liberated

NC1303205291 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1705 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] O free citizens: Victories continue to be achieved throughout Kurdistan. Today, the Governorate of Irbil, along with most of its districts, subdistricts, and villages, was liberated from the filth of the aggressors and the brutal 'Aflaqite regime. Most of this dear governorate was liberated from the filth of the criminal 'Aflaqites. Today, the district of al-Maghmur, the subdistrict of Afni Karak [names as heard], and Baqirta were liberated by the masses staging the uprising, the revolutionary armed men, and the heroic peshmergas. We congratulate you on this historic victory on the heroic land of Kurdistan.

Republican Guards Shell Holy Sites; Damage Cited

LD1403183491 Tehran IRNA in English 1809 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, Mar. 14, IRNA—The domes of the shrines of the "Immortal Martyrs of Karbala'" have been damaged by the long-range artillery fire of the Iraqi Republican Guards fighting the "popular forces", an Iraqi opposition group reported here today.

"Shells fired by government forces have inflicted damage on the golden-domes of the holy shrines of the lord of martyrs, Imam Husayn and his brother Abul-Fazlal Abbas," the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SAIRI) said quoting informed sources inside.

The shrine of Imam Husayn, the grandson of the prophet, who was tragically martyred at the Plain of Karbala in 683 A.D. is a venerated site of pilgrimage for world Muslims.

SAIRI also quoted its sources as saying Iraqi Republican Guards have also indiscriminately targetted the holy city of al-Najaf with artillery and tank fire in their bid to take control of them.

It claimed that al-Najaf, which houses the shrine of Imam Ali the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, was still controlled by the people.

Kurdish Group Claims 'Massacre' of Karkuk Citizens

LD1403162291 Tehran IRNA in English 1438 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, Mar. 14, IRNA—Iraqi Government forces massacred a group of Karkuk citizens today, a spokesman of the Patriotic Union of Iraq's Kurdistan (PUK) claimed in a telephone call. He said the troops forced the residents of some of the areas in Karkuk

which are under the government control to leave the city, and then strafed them with helicopters, killing a fairly large number of the defenseless people.

Terming the massacre "an unprecedented crime" the spokesman said he had no information yet on the number of those slain in "cold blood" by government forces fighting the "popular uprising" sweeping across Iraq.

Military Leaders Contact Anti-Saddam Opposition

PM1503092991 London SAWT AL-KUWAYT AL-DUWALI in Arabic 13 Mar 91 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Did You Know"]

[Text] Did You Know that two Iraqi corps commanders and six division commanders have contacted the Iraqi opposition, expressing their willingness to work jointly to topple Saddam, and that contacts are continuing to establish the shape of the alternative authority at the civilian and military levels?

Defecting Colonel on 'Shaky' Status of Loyal Forces

LD1403110991 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] An Iraqi officer who joined the Iraqi opposition in the wake of the popular uprising by that country's people, in an interview with the radio Voice of Revolutionary Iraq, described the shaky status of the Iraqi Armed Forces. IRNA quoted Staff Colonel Tahir 'Ali Hamud Ta'i, from the 10th Armored Division, who was born in Karbala', as saying: The people's relentless struggle against the military has intensified in all governorates, and this struggle will lead to the collapse of the Baghdad rulers, with God's succor. He added: The Iraqi Government forces have lost control of about 70 percent of al-Basrah Governorate.

Al-Basrah Tribes Pledge Loyalty to Party Official

NC1503002391 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 2227 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Comrade 'Abd-al-Ghani 'Abd-al-Ghafur, member of the Regional Command of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and secretary of its southern organization, has met with heads of tribes in al-Basrah and its districts, who came to governorate headquarters in al-Basrah, the city of cities, to renew the covenant of allegiance to the leader who is supported by God, President Saddam Husayn.

'Abd-al-Ghafur said that building Iraq's land and people along with Iraq's assertion of genuine national and pan-Arab values terrified the enemies and made them stumble into conspiracy. He noted the colonialist-Atlantic-Zionist aggression waged by 30 countries led by the United States, leader of imperialism, and the defeat of the conspiracy of the colonialists and their supporters from the forces of agentry and evil, a conspiracy that sought to destroy great Iraq's cultural structure.

He lauded the loyalty of al-Basrah masses and tribes to the leader who is supported by God, President Saddam Husayn.

The leaders of the tribes in al-Basrah, the city of cities, pledged to the leader of the people and nation, leader President Saddam Husayn, that they will remain his excellency's loyal soldiers on the road of construction and repulsion of the [word indistinct] colonialist-Zionist plot.

Repatriation of Iraqi Prisoners To Resume

AU1403094791 Paris AFP in English 0928 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Geneva, March 14 (AFP)—The repatriation of Iraqi prisoners of war will resume Friday with a group of 500 travelling to Baghdad by road, the International Committee of the Red Cross said Thursday. Iraq had told the ICRC that the road to be used by the POW convoys had been cleared of mines, a Red Cross spokesman said.

Two other groups of 500 will be released at two-day intervals. The allies and Iraqi military are to meet again on March 21 to review the repatriation of the prisoners.

Tens of thousands of Iraqis were captured or surrendered during the final phase of the Gulf War.

Arnold Luethold, head of the ICRC delegation in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, said Wednesday that an initial group of 500 Iraqi POWs due to be sent back home Monday were stranded at an agreed transfer point near the Saudi-Iraq border because of the danger of mines on the road north.

Talk Urges People To Work With Speed, Accuracy

NC1403162191 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1050 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Unattributed talk]

[Text] One phase has ended, and another has begun in the life of our people. We have gone through a very long and harsh stage. Today, we confront numerous responsibilities, hopes, and a new life. The war has ended, along with all its difficulties, trials, and abnormal circumstances. A completely different course begins now in the nature of behavior, performance, explanation, and action.

Since we fought this fierce and aggressive war in defense of the life we believe in and want, we are now required, for the sake of our consciences and families, and in order to realize our legitimate goals and ambitions, to remain loyal to the promise we made to ourselves to build and rebuild with effort and extraordinary means in keeping with the circumstances of this stage. We are required to innovate, each from his position and in his field of specialization, with a spirit of volunteering for the national duty, not with any other spirit. We work, exert efforts, develop opportunities and methods, find alternatives, and overcome difficulties and impossibilities, not only to perform our duties, but also to honor our moral, social, religious, and humanitarian commitments.

What is required today is not to rely on justifications, which are surely available—in fact, under the circumstances, they are many. What is required of all, without exception, is to perform our duty with a spirit of volunteerism and persistence in accomplishing it. What is required today is not to rely on deficient actions, opinions, decisions, or attempts to superficially convince ourselves that the task has been done, as though giving instructions, signing an order, or throwing responsibility on others were enough.

What must be done is to go all the way from concepts to decisions to implementation, and to continue implementation until the action realizes its goal and we reach the required result. The responsibility is a united one, from the highest to the lowest among us to implement it. It is a united responsibility between the citizens and the various state organs, among the state organs themselves, and among the citizens themselves.

What is required is not to sit on our hands and wait for the happy ending, or sit on our hands and wait for an official or employee whose efforts to reach us [word indistinct]. The state and its departments are you and I. Its efforts are the outcome of your efforts and mine. If efforts are joined together, they will lead to new work opportunities and huge construction. If personal efforts are restricted, God forbid, there will be no room for efficient production—not even for insignificant accomplishments.

Dear listeners, many nations in the world have gone through the woes of war. We can safely say that there isn't a single nation which has not gone through a war sometime in its history. Many of these nations rose from the rubble of war in an extraordinary way, taking inspiration from the situation they were in and exploiting its (?positive abnormality) to the maximum.

The people of Mesopotamia are rich in spirit and material, the inheritors of glories and experiments, and the owners of the loftiest guide for construction and sacrifice which has led to this gigantic rise, especially since we did not [word indistinct] from among the ruins, God forbid, [words indistinct].

The task of construction is the most difficult task in life. The Prophet Muhammad, God's peace and blessings be upon him, described this task as the greater jihad, in comparison to the jihad defending construction. He did so to explain the sacredness of work, giving, and joint efforts, which is a valuable deed, unparalleled by any other.

Noble deeds must be accompanied by objectivity, honesty, selflessness, correct calculations, and honest promises. Our ambitions and emotions must not prompt us to offer hasty and quick sacrifices, thus disregarding firmness, sound frameworks, and correct methods of performance. Speed is a requirement. It is a big requirement today in performance and achievement as a result of the known circumstances resulting from the war. However, this does not mean that one can ignore punctuality, irrespective of which side it comes from or from which level, whether individual, civilian, or official institutions [words indistinct] temporary formulas, deficient solutions, committing mistakes, and allowing them to pile up.

This is because this kind of sacrifice will leave behind a heavy legacy and new losses. Therefore, the need to take one's time, choose correct alternatives, use one's mind, and fully exploit available resources and materials becomes evident. The urgent need for using all the potential and contents among [word indistinct] emerges. It is no exaggeration when one says that the Iraqi person has huge potential. There is no limit to this potential, other than what God has decreed.

Dear listeners, our homes, streets, and districts, our dear homeland, all expect from us an honest effort and creative initiative. Many world countries have gone through many admirable experiences. They have set an example in cooperation, solidarity, and unity of potential to get out of the postwar period. These countries witnessed ideal experiments in rejecting deficient formulas, thinking, and deeds. They rejected the principle of depending on one another and leaving things in a vacuum of irresponsibility. We have set an example of steadfastness in combat, become an example to be emulated in struggle and jihad, and an impregnable fortress vindicating principles and values. Similarly, we have the same determination to set an example in working and giving, and also in building an intrinsically unique experience of building great Iraq.

Kurdish Radio Calls for Discipline, Unity

LD1403170391 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Kurdish 1745 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] [Announcer, in Arabic] Because of the conditions that have arisen since the liberation of towns and hamlets in our dear Kurdistan and the emancipation of the rebelling Kurdistan masses who are launching an uprising against the tyranny and oppression of the Baghdad dictatorship and its repressive bodies, and in order to safeguard the gains won by the efforts and [word indistinct] of the Kurdish masses and our valiant armed forces, we urge everyone not to weaken these great gains of the Kurdish people but to take advantage of them by observing the following points:

1. Strict discipline in the towns, and adherence to the instructions issued by the committees of the Kurdish Front, which is making efforts to reorganize affairs in the towns in order to bring them back to normal.

2. Full cooperation with the front's committees in all fields and spheres by reopening all institutions and [government] departments, electric power stations, and all service utilities, to take care of the citizens' daily and living affairs.

3. The property of government institutions and departments, and public service utilities, are the public property of the masses; protecting them would demonstrate a high level of awareness and [word indistinct] by the

citizens and would elevate them to the level of aspirations and responsibility in building a new Kurdistan that would enjoy freedom, democracy, and security.

4. To protect our gains, we are all required to make every effort to unite and strengthen ranks in order to confront the current and future threats through discipline, and also by joining the ranks of the peshmerga forces and offering them assistance and backing.

5. We urge all citizens, all parties and organizations, and all armed people to turn a new leaf of fraternal interrelations in which the interest of the people and the homeland will be supreme, and to leave behind the remnants of the [word indistinct] hateful past in which the criminal dictatorial regime in Baghdad played a prominent role by disuniting and planting the seeds of division and acrimony among the sons of our Kurdish people in particular and the Iraqi people in general.

'World Conscience' Urged To Note Saddam's Terror

LD1403172291 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Kurdish 1745 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] [Announcer, in Arabic] The time has come to invite every journalist and photographer in the world, the time has come to invite the world's conscience to liberated Kurdistan, the time has come to invite the whole universe to this country which used to be called [word indistinct] of the orient, so that all can see for themselves what Saddam Husayn has done to it, and how he transformed its most beautiful villages and most splendid hamlets to a heap of [words indistinct] during his reign of terror [words indistinct]. Yes, we are inviting the world's conscience to Kurdistan so that the world can see for itself the truth about Saddam Husayn and the truth about his conscience, which has been dead for a long time.

Now that thousands of squre kilometers of territory in Iraqi Kurdistan have been liberated, it would be possible for the world to see the destruction and ruin to thousands of villages, hamlets and towns which [passage indistinct].

Service Installations, Utilities Being Repaired

NC1403110891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0955 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Maysan, 14 Mar (INA)—Citizens in the Maysan Governorate in southern Iraq are witnessing extraordinary efforts to repair the service installations and utilities destroyed by the American-Zionist-Atlantic aggression.

'Abd-al-Ilah Mashhadani, (?governor) of Maysan, told INA that the technical and service departments in the province have begun repairing schools subjected to enemy attacks. He said that the damage caused to hospitals and health centers has been repaired, and that the restoration of normal life in all departments in the province is under way.

He noted that work is continuing to restore vital services in all parts of the province, such as water, electricity, and other essential services.

Regulations for Rationing Gasoline, Gas Oil

NC1403215191 Baghdad Domestic Service in Arabic 1932 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Excerpt] The Oil Ministry has issued instructions and regulations for rationing gasoline and gas oil to citizens within the Baghdad municipality. The following is the text of these instructions:

In implementing the order of leader President Saddam Husayn, may God preserve him, pertaining to the resumption of supplying gasoline and gas oil to citizens in Baghdad, the Oil Ministry announces that at 1200 on Sunday, 17 March 1991, it will begin to distribute ration cards for gasoline and gas oil at People's Councils for the owners of vehicles that use gasoline and gas oil and which carry only Baghdad city license plates. The amounts will be:

Thirty liters of gasoline every 20 days.

Seventy-five liters of gas oil for small buses and trucks each month. These are buses under 40 passenger capacity and trucks of five-ton load capacity.

One hundred twenty liters of gas oil for big buses and trucks each month in accordance with the following regulations:

1. For vehicles using super-grade gasoline, taxis, and passenger vehicles bearing only Baghdad license plates:

A. The vehicle's registration card. This should be a valid card. Cards that are not renewed and papers that are being processed for renewal will be unacceptable. These registration cards should be issued by the Baghdad Traffic Department.

B. The family's ration card. The name of the vehicle owner must match the name of the head of the family. In case the car is registered in the name of a family member, the identity card of the person must be presented in order to confirm his relationship to the bearer of the ration card. Only ration cards issued in Baghdad will be acceptable.

C. Only one vehicle for each family will be given a card regardless of the number of vehicles owned by the family or the various kinds that are run on gasoline.

2. Vehicles using gas oil:

Only the vehicle's registration card should be presented. This should be valid. Cards that are not renewed and papers being processed for registration renewal will be unacceptable. These cards should be issued by the Baghdad Traffic Department.

3. Xerox copies of registration cards are unacceptable. Only original copies are acceptable.

4. Supplies will be distributed by the following gas stations when Coupon No. One is presented. We remind the respected citizens that their share of coupons will be guaranteed for one month from the date this operation is started.

We hope that the respected citizens will abide by the above regulations and contribute toward keeping matters orderly in order to help people obtain their quotas of fuel. We thank you for your cooperation. [passage omitted]

PLO's Qaddumi on 'Major Reaction' to Gulf War

NC1403100791 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0900 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Baghdad, 14 Mar (INA)—Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO's Political Department, has declared that Iraq emerged victorious from its showdown with America and its allies, because it resisted with unprecedent bravery the large and serious aggression against the Arab nation with the purpose of imposing hegemony and custodianship on its independent decisionmaking.

In an interview with the Iraqi magazine ALIF BA' published today, Qaddumi said that the background to the plot and aggression against Iraq goes back to the period before 2 August. It was designed to destroy Iraq's military power, which had upset the balance of power in favor of Arab national security.

The Palestinian official stated that the United States had realized that Iraq was the only country that was working sincerely for the Palestinian issue and possessed the capability to confront all attempts to impose solutions on the Arab nation.

He referred to the treasonous role played by Egypt's ruler in complicating the problem and preventing attempts to find a solution to the situation within an Arab framework. He also referred to his insistence on destroying the Arab nation's unity and independent decisionmaking. This provided the cover for the foreign presence in the Arab Gulf region.

Qaddumi said he expected the Arab homeland and the countries of the Third World to witness major reactions against the regimes that participated in the aggression against Iraq and provided cover for it to strike at the Iraqi people.

Qaddumi stated that the countries that participated in the aggression against Iraq have suffered heavy losses in equipment and life as a result of their treacherous aggression. He stressed that the aggressor states and their disinformation will not be able to hide these losses from Arab and world public opinion.

Soviet General Cites 'Dirty War' Against Baghdad

NC1303210491 Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 6 Mar p 9

[By Ahmad Sabri]

[Text] Brigadier General Viktor Filatov, Soviet military expert and chief editor of the military magazine, mouthpiece of the Soviet Defense Ministry, has described the war launched by the United States on Iraq as a dirty war that targeted its military power and the pillars of daily life in Iraq.

In an interview with ALIF BA', the Soviet military expert said that the spirit of resistance and defiance that has characterized the Iraqi people shows that they are a brave people, willing to sacrifice and to reject all forms of hegemony and humiliation. He pointed out the failure of the aggressors led by the United States to affect the morale of the Iraqi people and their ability to proceed with everyday life in an amazing and appreciable manner.

He added that all indications point to the failure of the United States and its allies in their aggressive war against Iraq. They failed to accomplish their drawn objectives and dreams. Here is Iraq, still steadfast, and the morale of its people still escalating toward defending its sovereignty.

The chief editor of the military magazine praised the militant spirit of the Iraqi Army and its good performance in confronting 30 states, led by the United States, with all their military and technological capabilities, in addition to psychological warfare and media propaganda. The Soviet expert ridiculed the U.S. and allied claims that they achieved military superiority in the ground battle. He stressed that these claims must be proved by field evidence. Moreover, he stressed that what was accomplished in the operational theater affirms Iraqi superiority, represented in being able to thwart all objectives of the aggressors in their ground attack. In my opinion, this alone is enough to refute the false U.S. claims.

Brigadier General Viktor Filatov expressed his absolute belief in Iraq's ability to overcome the negative effects of the dirty war launched by the United States and its allies, because the Iraqis are brave and have fought in defense of their national dignity and sovereignty against all forms of foreign intervention and attempts to impose guardianship on Iraq.

No USSR Offer on Command Center Received

TA1503104491 Tel Aviv HATZOFE in Hebrew 15 Mar 91 p 1

[Text] Israel has not received any new Soviet offer; therefore, the alleged proposal to set up a military command center for the Middle East countries—which would be permanently manned by representatives from Israel and the Arab countries, in addition to observers from the two superpowers—was never made. This is what the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem told our correspondent yesterday. At the same time, it is not unlikely that such a proposal is being formulated and discussed in Moscow by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and his Soviet interlocutors.

The Foreign Ministry has said that many ideas concerning the Middle East are currently being raised. One can assume that the Soviets are raising ideas of their own in order to stay in the picture and that the aforementioned proposal is one of them, but it has not reached Israel.

The view in Jerusalem is that this proposal has many positive aspects, such as detection of preparations for war, but it is doubtful whether the Arabs would accept it, because it calls for cooperation with Israel under the same roof. It is difficult to believe that an extremist country such as Syria would accept such a proposal.

$20 Billion in Loans Sought From U.S., Germany

TA1403194491 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Israel has asked Germany to serve as one of the underwriters of guarantees for loans it hopes to obtain around the world to finance immigrant absorption. Our economic affairs correspondent 'Oded Shahar reports that Finance Ministry Director General Shalom Zinger accompanied Foreign Minister David Levi to Germany to promote that issue. Zinger will present Israel's economic requirements in Bonn. At issue are loan guarantees to the tune of approximately $20 billion for a five-year period. Israel would like the United States to underwrite half that sum, and other friendly governments, including Germany, to underwrite the remainder. Our correspondent points out that the request for German loan guarantees is unrelated to the demand for reparations from the GDR.

Death Penalty for 'Nationalist' Murderers Rejected

TA1303164591 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1600 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] The Knesset this afternoon rejected Knesset Member [MK] Tzahi Hanegbi's private bill to impose the death penalty for terrorists who carry out particularly vicious murder for nationalist motives. Thirty-five MK's voted against bill and 16 supported it, including Minister Rehav'am Ze'evi and Deputy Minister Binyamin Netanyahu although the Ministerial Committee on Legislation and Law Enforcement's opposition to the bill committed them as well. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that there was a heated debate accompanied by catcalls. Speaker Dan Tikhon had to order a five-minute break in proceedings to calm tempers.

'Arafat Reportedly To Form Territories Government

TA1403181691 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1800 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] In an exclusive report from an undisclosed source, Radio Luxembourg says that 'Arafat may soon announce the establishment in the territories of a Palestinian government headed by Faysal al-Husayni.

Our correspondent in Paris Gid'on Kouts reports that the brief report was broadcast tonight in a news flash featuring the station's exclusive reports, and it has not been confirmed by any other media source.

The report noted that 'Arafat decided to take this step as a gesture of good will toward residents of the territories.

Air Force Raids 'Terrorist' Target in Lebanon

TA1503092591 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0915 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Here is an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman's announcement on an Air Force attack. Air Force planes this morning attacked a terrorist target on the Beirut-Damascus road in Lebanon. The target was hit and all our aircraft returned safely to base, the spokesman said. The target was used as a base for departure for attacks. Our military correspondent points out that it was the fifth Air Force raid in Lebanon since the Gulf war started.

Sources: Hostage Deal Must Include IDF POW's

TA1503114291 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 15 Mar 91 p A1

[Report by Ori Nir and Eytan Rabin]

[Excerpts] Iran has asked the United States to exert pressure on Israel to release Shiite Shaykh 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd—who was abducted from south Lebanon by an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] unit some two years ago—in return for Tehran's aid in the release of Western hostages—six of which are American—held by Shiite organizations in Lebanon. [passage omitted]

Defense sources have said that any negotiations for the release of POW's must include the seven IDF soldiers who are missing or held captive in Lebanon. According to the sources, Israel would accept no deal in which it is asked to release POW's it is holding in return for the release of Western hostages, if it does not include the return of the IDF soldiers. Israel is demanding that the International Red Cross be allowed to visit the IDF POW's in Lebanon.

Arens, Netherlands Counterpart Discuss Patriots

TA1403144691 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1430 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] The Netherlands defense minister has thanked Defense Minister Moshe Arens for the knowledge and the learning experience Israel has relayed to the officers who manned the Netherlands Patriot missile battery deployed here. The minister pointed out that, beyond the military significance, it bears political import and Israel has learned who its friends are. Minister Arens expressed his deep appreciation and said that this gesture will be remembered here for many years.

In the meeting between the defense minister and his Netherlands counterpart, Minister Arens said that the chief source of instability in the region is the steady arms race. He suggested that the arms exporters reach an agreement on discontinuing the sale of arms to the region to promote peace. This should be given top priority, said Defense Minister Moshe Arens.

Health Minister Olmert Leaves for Bulgaria 12 Mar

TA1303114791 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 13 Mar 91 p A3

[Report by 'Edna Aridor]

[Excerpt] Health Minister Ehud Olmert left yesterday morning for Bulgaria. This is his second trip abroad in a week.

Dr. Moshe Mashiah, the Health Ministry director general, said that this was a return visit. Six months ago Bulgarian Public Health Minister Prof. Chernozemski visited Israel, and an agreement was reached then on bilateral cooperation in the realm of health. Minister Olmert's reciprocal visit to Bulgaria was originally planned for 15 January but was postponed because of the Gulf war. The visit to Sofia is scheduled to end tomorrow. [passage omitted]

Reportage on Foreign Minister's Visit to Germany

WA1403182891

For German and Israeli media reportage on the visit by Foreign Minister David Levi to Germany, including reports on his talks with German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher on opportunities for peace initiatives in the Middle East, please see the Germany section of the 14 March West Europe DAILY REPORT and subsequent issues.

Arabs Permitted Back to Work in Tel Aviv, Haifa

TA1503103891 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1000 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] From Sunday [17 March], Arab residents of the territories will also be permitted to enter the Tel Aviv and Haifa areas which have been closed to them since the start of the Gulf war. Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that work in Israel will be based on the recently decreed conditions, which include organized transportation and employment reached through the official labor exchange. In the Tel Aviv and Haifa areas there will be additional restrictions. Permits will be granted only to workers in construction, industry, and health services, and in places which employ at least 10 workers.

Incidents in Territories Reported

12 Mar Update

TA1303133591 Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 13 Mar 91 p 6

[Report by Shraga Zeiger]

[Excerpts] At noon yesterday an inhabitant of Gaza's Rimal neighborhood armed with two knives tried to break into the military court on the seaside near the al-Shati' refugee camp. Soldiers tried to stop him, but when he resisted they opened fire on him, wounding him in the leg. He was taken to al-Shifa' Hospital where he was reported to have sustained slight wounds. [passage omitted]

Masked men yesterday shot in the chest and head a 49-year-old inhabitant of Rafah whom they suspected of being a collaborator. The man was evacuated to Barzilay Hospital in Ashqelon, where he was reported in moderate condition. [passage omitted]

[A pool report on page 11 of Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew on 13 March adds that "the Jerusalem District Court yesterday handed out conditional prison sentences, ranging from one to three months, and community service to 11 of 15 settlers who had been charged with rioting and causing damage in the al-Duhayshah refugee camp about four years ago. The four other defendants were acquitted.

["Prison sentences ranging from five to six and a half years were handed out yesterday by the military court in Nabulus against the kidnappers of Sha'ul Mish'anya on 24 August 1989. As may be recalled, the 50-year-old jewelry dealer from Bat Yam had been abducted in Tulkarm where he had gone to make a transaction. Following intense searches he was found in a water well in the village of 'Abud in the Tulkarm District."]

13 Mar Report

TA1403124491 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 14 Mar 91 p A2

[Report by Yizhar Be'er and Eytan Rabin]

[Excerpts] A Jew from Hebron shot and wounded a Palestinian who tried to stab him with a screwdriver in an alley in the city's casbah. [passage omitted]

The Jew pulled out a gun and fired one bullet, which hit his assailant in the head, moderately wounding him.

Army and police forces arrived at the scene at once and evacuated the wounded Arab to a hospital. The Army cordoned the casbah off and began searches.

A night curfew, from 1700 until this morning, was imposed on Arab locations in the West Bank. During the day, a curfew was clamped on Ramallah.

Three wanted men, members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, were arrested by the security forces yesterday in Tulkarm.

Palestinian sources reported several clashes between Army troops and local residents in the refugee camps of Rafah, Khan Yunus, and Jabalyah in the Gaza Strip in which three persons were wounded. The Army spokesman said the Gaza Strip was quiet yesterday and no one had been wounded. A curfew remains in force in the al-Nusayrat refugee camp.

The military court in Gaza sentenced a local Arab to 20 years in prison. The man had been a member of a strike committee and had given shelter to Mahmud Halabi, who killed seven people in Tel Aviv a few months ago. [passage omitted]

AL-SHA'B: Palestinians 'Needed' Baker Meeting

TA1403202391 Jerusalem AL-SHA'B in Arabic 14 Mar 91 pp 1, 7

[Editorial: "A Clear Stance"]

[Text] The Palestinian figures who met with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker two days ago expressed their clear and explicit stance unambiguously and with a frankness that did not lack courage in presentation and debate. This stance expresses the common Palestinian's pulse in the occupied territories about the legitimacy of the Palestinian people's representation by the PLO as the only party speaking in their name, epitomizing their national identity, and expressing their will, and the only one authorized to represent them in all the negotiations and political efforts aimed at establishing a comprehensive and lasting peace in the region and resolving the Palestinian problem on the basis of "land for peace."

The Palestinian figures who met with the U.S. secretary in one of the most important legs of his current tour of the region did not refrain from recalling the Palestinian people's commitment to the initiative and political program approved by the 19th session of the Palestine National Council held in Algiers in November 1988. This was the program in which the PLO responded favorably to the requirements of peace and, consequently, gained the respect and appreciation of the international community. This, at a time when Israeli proposals still fail to face the realities and are far from responding to those requirements. Therefore, seeking the most adequate means to induce Israel to respond favorably to the requirements of peace is called for, just as Iraq was forced to implement international legitimacy.

If we do not wish the allies to inflict the same devastation and death on Israel that they inflicted on Iraq, what is required is for words to become compatible with deeds and for international legitimacy to be applied in Palestine, Lebanon, and the Golan Heights just as it was applied in the Gulf. Otherwise, this legitimacy will become that of the jungle, not international legitimacy.

While we are very proud of the clear and explicit stance expressed by the personalities who met with the U.S. secretary, we view this stance as a decisive and unequivocal response to all those who began to rub their hands in glee, in anticipation of splits in the PLO, as well as to all those who began waging a cold war against our legitimate leadership in an attempt to drive a wedge inside the Palestinian house. Events have proved that this house is immune to discord and splits and that its inhabitants rise to the level of national responsibility through democratic behavior inside the house. This renders it impregnable to this or that party and to withstand all the challenges that seek to destroy its foundations in order to control its present and future.

Yes, we needed this meeting, this dialogue, and the clear Palestinian word that expressed the pulse of the masses in order to silence those who resent us, wish us misfortune, and mistrust our people and leadership.

AL-QUDS on Baker Meeting With Palestinians

TA1403175191 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 13 Mar 91 p 5

[Editorial: "After the War"]

[Text] At a meeting held yesterday between a number of Palestinian figures and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, it became evident to the U.S. secretary that peacemaking in the region requires discarding dual standards and the policy of doubletalk, and recalling that international legitimacy is an indivisible whole.

Secretary Baker became convinced that realpolitik obligates anyone who talks about peace in the region to acknowledge the principle of the Palestinian people's right to choose their own representatives.

The U.S. secretary spoke about the need to launch the peace process. He stressed that lack of a settlement of the Palestinian problem will keep the region in a cycle of conflicts and wars and that all the talk about future security and economic arrangements could not be put into effect as long as the Palestinian problem remained unresolved in all its aspects.

Secretary Baker did not say how the Security Council resolutions relating to the Palestinian problem would be implemented, nor did he say anything about implementing what U.S. President Bush said in his address, or what the U.S. Administration will do regarding the Israeli Government's rejection of the principle of withdrawal from the Arab territories it occupied in 1967.

If the U.S. Administration continues to ignore Palestinian rights, and if the suspension of dialogue with the PLO continues, how can a peace process be launched? Peace will not be achieved by talk, statements, and declarations but by deed and serious, sincere intentions.

The Palestinian people's suffering has lasted too long. It has been proven to the entire world that the key to stability and peace in the region lies in a comprehensive solution of the Palestinian problem, and that the application of international legitimacy constitutes the only real way for the winds of peace to blow in the region.

Paper Urges 'Pragmatism' From Palestinian Leaders

TA1403164291 Jerusalem AL-FAJR in English 11 Mar 91 p 4

[Editorial: "Flexibility For All"]

[Text] We are hearing some positive statements on the Palestinian question coming from the United States and Western Europe. There is currently a lot of diplomatic activity aimed at reaching a solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Clearly there is growing interest in the Palestinian part of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This interest stems from the fact that the U.S. and its allies in Western Europe fought a bitter war against Iraq under the umbrella of international law and under the pretext of fighting injustice in the form of Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. They earned the legitimacy to fight Iraq by asserting that the occupation of one country by another is abhorrent, let alone illegal, and by getting the Security Council to pass 12 resolutions condemning Iraq which the allies used to legitimize their war against Iraq.

During the entire seven months the United States and its allies prepared to put an end to Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories was continuously brought up. Parallels were made between the two conflicts, and this created embarrassment for the United States and its allies for allowing Israel to defy Security Council resolutions, particularly 242 passed in 1967 and 338 passed in 1973, which call for Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. Rather than pushing Israel to implement these two resolutions, the United States stood by Israel and helped it throw into the trash can these two resolutions and every other resolution condemning Israel's policy in the occupied territories and toward the Palestinian people passed over the last 43 years.

Now, after all that was done to get Iraq out of Kuwait, the United States and its allies are in a moral bind, meaning they must resolve the Palestinian question. However, they want to do it their way and Israel's way, not the Palestinians' way. They are talking about a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and along with it the Palestinian issue, rather than the other way around. They are also mentioning a solution without the Palestinians' legitimate and sole representative, the PLO.

What this means is that these countries have not learned from past experience that unless the Palestinian question is properly addressed and Palestinian rights justly considered, there will never be peace here. Israel can sign peace agreements with other Arab countries, but the Palestinian issue will remain the decisive factor toward peace. The Palestinian people have chosen the PLO to represent them and want to keep it this way regardless of what the United States, Israel, and their allies think or want. Never mind the outcome of the Gulf war, we still feel very strong simply because we know our cause is just and moral. The Palestinian people are united in their demands and want to see their predicament resolved into something better, not worse. For this reason, we advise the United States and its allies to drop their tactics of trying to split the Palestinians between inside and outside the occupied territories or talk them into looking for an alternative leadership.

The Palestinian people's cause is one, regardless of where they live. The recent events and the difficulty facing the Palestinian community in Kuwait only strengthen our resolve to stick together and call for a permanent and just peace and for a free, independent and sovereign homeland on Palestinian soil. This is our stand and we are not relinquishing it.

At the same time, the Palestinian leadership inside and outside the occupied areas should show a high level of flexibility, realism and pragmatism in their approach to peace efforts. We should not shun peace proposals, rather consider them and talk about them until we can make them work in our favor. We should also meet whoever wants to meet us and even initiate the meeting ourselves. We have nothing to worry about if we know exactly what we want, and we believe that we do know what we want.

Paper Views U.S. Commitment to Peace Process

TA1403142291 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 14 Mar 91 p B1

[Editorial: "Nonrejection as Progress"]

[Text] The U.S. secretary of state's visit took place in a climate of good will and even of friendship which both sides, the guest and the hosts, outdid each other to emphasize. Although this should not lead to the conclusion that all the differences of opinion between the United States and Israel have been ironed out, the overall impression is that James Baker made a sincere effort to take the positions of the Israeli Government into account and that the prime minister tried very hard not to enter into a dispute with him.

Until not long ago, Jerusalem's official line was that the Arab states must follow in Egypt's footsteps before Israel agrees to help deal with the problem of the political future of the administered territories. Yitzhaq Shamir

and David Levi can point to their credit the fact that James Baker embraced the "double-track approach" formula, whereby the United States promised to make an effort to persuade the Arab countries that the time has come to terminate the state of war with Israel. Baker told his hosts that he had begun his persuasion campaign during his stay in the Saudi capital and that he would pursue it in Damascus.

However, Shamir and Levi were also confronted with the need to come to terms with the U.S. concept that perceives the Palestinian problem as the second track, parallel to the first. The secretary of state held a long meeting with a delegation of Palestinians who told him that the PLO remains the one and only representative of the Palestinian people and who did not conceal from him that they had received approval to meet him from the PLO leadership in Tunis.

Baker's reaffirmation that the United States would not speak to the PLO should be seen against this backdrop. Notwithstanding the ambiguity involved, the prime minister presumably realizes that by virtue of Baker's meeting in Jerusalem with leading Palestinians the United States entered indirect negotiations with the PLO. The determination to advance a solution of the Palestinian problem was also evident in the fact that he urged Yitzhaq Shamir to adopt "confidence-building" measures in the territories to ease the burden of occupation, and in that he presented the implementation of such measures as a condition for gestures on the part of the Arab countries, such as calling off the Arab boycott and the UN General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism.

From the time Shim'on Peres raised the idea of an international conference, Shamir fought it with all his might. Indeed, the words international conference have disappeared from the vocabulary of the U.S. leadership. However, the regional conference which Baker said the United States would strive to summon and the international conference are like two peas in a pod: it would be attended by all the Arab countries, it would be held under the joint sponsorship of the United States and the Soviet Union, and the Palestinians would be accorded the same status as Israel.

The Americans will also look for a way to include Britain and France in the peace process. The United States cannot renege on its commitment to them in view of their participation in the war against Saddam Husayn.

We do not yet know how Hafiz al-Asad and Mikhail Gorbachev will react to James Baker's pleadings. But, if they agree to meet him halfway, the Likud-extreme right government would not be able to avoid a decision on whether to be represented at the conference or whether to boycott it and risk alienating the United States.

Margaret Tutwiler told journalists that Yitzhaq Shamir "did not reject Baker's proposals." Nonrejection is not consent. However, in view of the prime minister's known positions in the distant and recent past, nonrejection could be seen as progress.

The secretary of state's appearances and talks should not be dismissed as a public relations ploy to help the administration in the domestic U.S. arena. The clear impression is that the U.S. leadership is seriously ready to work on settling the Arab-Israeli and Israeli-Palestinian disputes. This is the forecast which the government and all the coalition factions must now bear in mind.

James Baker seems to want to succeed in his recently launched effort, just as Henry Kissinger succeeded with his shuttle diplomacy in the wake of the Yom Kippur War. Even if it is not yet clear if and when President George Bush will visit Kuwait City and other capitals in the region, including Jerusalem, the secretary of state is working and will pursue his effort, with the full backing of the President.

King Husayn Expected To Survive, Saddam To Fall

TA1403114291 Jerusalem Domestic Service in Hebrew 1100 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Sources in Israel have said that most of the recent terrorist activity from Jordan against Israel has been carried out by extreme Muslims and that the Jordanians are making an effort to prevent infiltrations and other terrorist activity from Jordan. According to the sources, the Jordanian Army has succeeded in preventing a much of this hostile activity, but Jordanian elements are not preventing the expansion of the extreme Muslim base in the country.

The sources added that there is no doubt that the extreme Muslims have an influence on junior officers and soldiers in the Jordanian Army, but there are no signs of destabilization regarding control of and discipline in the Jordanian Army.

Although King Husayn is in a bad situation, the view in Israel is that his downfall is not expected because there is no real alternative to him.

Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that according to the Israeli sources, Jordan helped Iraq during the Gulf war. It was part of the Iraqi early-warning deployment and even helped in intelligence, instruction, and operating the Hawk missiles taken from Kuwait.

As for the situation in Iraq, the sources said that Saddam Husayn will find it hard to survive, although at this stage it is hard to tell just how long he will remain in power. Iraq, as a country, is not functioning: Water and electricity systems are paralyzed, and life has not returned to normal. At the same time, it appears that Saddam is in control of the country and so far has managed to suppress central elements of the rebellion against him. He has also managed to prevent the riots from spreading to Baghdad.

Commentary Views Messages From Baker Visit

TA1303143591 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 13 Mar 91 p B1

[Commentary by Gid'on Samet: "Doing Ourselves A Favor"]

[Text] Obviously, there is no way to know whether an arrangement will be reached by Israel, the Palestinians, and the Arab countries. Whether the current U.S. effort will succeed or fail, as did most of its predecessors, remains a total mystery. The question of pressure yes-or-no and Israeli concessions yes-or-no remain shrouded in secrecy. Nothing is certain, not even in the cards the prime minister is holding so close to his chest. Consequently, based on their experience with the mother of all interpretations during the war, commentators had better be cautious with their interpretations if they do not want to put their prestige on the line.

We are now entering a tortuous road of desires, yearnings, and refusals. It will presumably not be an easy game—one can definitely bet on it—and will not necessarily be won by he who is the most intransigent. Constraints of historic dimensions, both in the region and worldwide, may have the upper hand. Therefore, the participants in this big political game should exercise special caution with their public declarations. Occasionally, the politicians will pale next to the circumstances.

When James Baker says that his country will not exert pressure, what does he have in mind? Does reading out (as he did once) the phone number of the White House mean pressure, or does it not? When he eventually announces that his administration has opted for letting Israel and the Palestinians to stew in their own juice is it a concession or a threat? Should such a seasoned politician be expected to declare now the measures he intends to take in the future? Or should he leave behind the feeling—so typically American—that political and geopolitical forces will tip the scales in fair play?

His country has announced on several occasions that it does not intend to negotiate with PLO representatives. On the face of it, this is what its own standards as an honest broker demands. But what did the secretary of state do yesterday if not talk with the avowed representatives of the PLO? After all, Faysal al-Husayni and his colleagues would not have met him had they not received the go-ahead from Tunis, and the same holds true about other groups in the Palestinian establishment. Those who were supposed to talk on behalf of the oppositionist Popular Front and the Islamic movement, Hamas, (Baker would not have objected to them either) absented themselves because they did not get permission.

Not only regional conditions, but also the ways and means (another U.S. idiom) conducive to negotiations, changed in the last few months. The one-time cliche in the United States and even in Israel was that "Israel should be helped to help itself." This saying, coined by George Bull, a talented assistant secretary of state in the 1960's, is now passe. The truth is that the United States does not need a settlement between Israel and the Arab countries now as much as it may have needed it before the war. The United States sits quite pat in the region, even if Israelis and Palestinians do not smile at each other.

As it looks now, the U.S. modus operandi is that it is Israel who should help itself. We would not be doing America any favors by progressing toward a solution to the problem of the territories. America feels quite good, thank you, even if our government insists on interpreting our needs differently. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the other Gulf countries are busy punishing the Palestinians for supporting Saddam. As far as they are concerned, 'Arafat and his people can go to hell. These regimes have always paid lip service to a Palestinian state, notwithstanding the fact that the very notion of popular rights is alien to them and that they perceive the realization of these rights by a radical movement as threatening.

And what if the intifadah flares up after Washington does everything possible to bring about a settlement? To the Arabs, it would feel right seeing that it had reached a series of settlements with them. As for pressured and troubled Israel, it would still be needing its help and would still be coming hat in hand with aid requests.

In other words, Baker is right—he apparently reflects inner U.S. thinking—when he says that a settlement is necessary "because it is important to your vital interests." He did not say "our" interests.

Israel's warped thinking attributes to the Americans and the Europeans evil intentions which should be dealt with and eradicated. This approach is also popular in circles outside the government and the Likud. It is easy to persuade Israelis, who are paranoid as it is, that an international conspiracy is in the works to dispossess them.

By resisting every friend and foe, the government may yet again remove the threat of a solution. We will not be pressured, the government will declare to the sound of fawning applause, and will once again be driven into a bleak corner of isolation, terror, and security attained by the sword. Washington will not be the one that will shed the tears. You know what? It will not even be furious; for sure, it will help us win when the next war comes along.

King, Syrian President Discuss Developments

NC1403215591 Amman Domestic Service in Arabic 2100 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Over the telephone this evening, His Majesty King Husayn and His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad discussed latest Arab developments and efforts to bring peace to the region, as well as relations between the two brotherly countries. They stressed their determination to keep up their consultations over Arab developments, especially at this critical juncture in Arab history.

Prince Hasan on Baker Tour, Peace Conference

PM1403141891 Madrid ABC in Spanish 12 Mar 91 p 36

[Interview with Crown Prince Hasan Bin-Talal by Juan Carlos Azcue; date, place not given]

[Excerpt] Amman—[passage omitted] [Azcue] American Secretary of State James Baker is in Jerusalem to meet with the Palestinians. His Middle East tour does not include Jordan, however.

[Hasan] We are happy that this meeting is taking place and particularly that it is with the Palestinians of the occupied territories. Jordan is willing to help the Palestinians, whatever their objective, to achieve their legitimate rights. As for Mr. Baker's tour, I can tell you that we have had no contacts with the American leaders. We hope that this can happen, however. It is important to point out that if the Israelis—I do not mean all of them—are just thinking of establishing an alliance with the United States, that will hinder their relations with their neighboring countries and with the Palestinians.

[Azcue] There is again talk in international circles of the possibility of a Palestinian-Jordanian conference. What is your opinion, Your Highness?

[Hasan] I'll be very frank with you. The current suspicions that Jordan is interested in taking the Palestinians' role are entirely false. They alone are responsible for arguing their own case, and they are the only ones who count. We are willing to help them as much as necessary.

[Azcue] How have you endured the external pressures during the war?

[Hasan] Within our democratic context people have said whatever they wanted. The important thing is that it is now over. But the Jordanian economy has been paralyzed: One-third of the population is impoverished, and Jordanian children are suffering from malnutrition—according to UNICEF reports—which is something that has never happened before in our country, which was one of the most highly developed in the area. The priority now is to consider whether all this can be resolved, without discriminating between the Jordanians, Palestinians, Lebanese, Iraqis, and Israelis.

[Azcue] The impression is that the Jordanians feel sad and disappointed about the outcome of the war and that they also feel sidelined in the present situation.

[Hasan] Jordan must again perform its proper role by its own merits, and nobody must reproach themselves for it.

[Azcue] Could Jordan's democratic process undergo any changes?

[Hasan] The king said in his latest speech that the constitution is developing. The important thing now is to link the executive and judicial authorities to avoid a recurrence of the problems that emerged at the start of democracy.

[Azcue] Your Highness, do you have the impression that the differences that exist between the Emirates of the Gulf, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia will be overcome in time?

[Hasan] Look, even the Americans have had major disagreements with the Israelis. This usually passes. In the Jordanian context we must consider why they have been so profound and look back at what happened 2 August—the date of the invasion of Kuwait—and the events leading up to it.

[Azcue] Your Highness, do you not believe that the steps being taken by Jordanian democracy are a "bad example" to such despotic regimes as Saudi Arabia and hitherto Kuwait?

[Hasan] You will understand that I cannot, and must not, express opinions about what happens in the countries around us.

[Azcue] In his latest speech his majesty the king said that he was willing to establish diplomatic relations with all countries. Is this a concealed way of including the State of Israel?

[Hasan] This is quite clear, in the context of an international conference involving Arabs, Palestinians, and Israel. We are indeed talking about recognizing Israel. This is quite clear.

'Sources' React to Abu-Sharif's Proposals

JN1403093691 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 14 Mar 91 pp 1, 5

[By Nirmin Murad, JORDAN TIMES staff reporter]

[Text] Initial Jordanian reaction to Wednesday morning reports of the PLO dropping its demand to be treated as an equal partner in negotiations with the Israelis and accepting something less than the complete occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip for a Palestinian state was a mixture of disbelief and pragmatism.

Apart from the fact that no-one believed that the political advisor to PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat would forego the Palestinian people's rights to all of their

occupied territories outside the framework of negotiations, the Jordanians noted that the relevant U.N. resolutions never called on Palestinians to take such steps even to appease the United States and Israel.

Jordanian sources said Mr. Abu-Sharif's proposals as quoted from Sky channel, were beyond what was acceptable to all groups comprising the PLO, such as the Popular and Democratic fronts for the liberation of Palestine.

However, only that point in particular, giving up land and accepting less than all of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, created any controversy among official circles.

Sources said they believed that by dropping its demand to be treated as an equal partner in negotiations with Israelis the PLO was actually reviving the idea of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

If asked officially by the organisation to do so, Jordan would probably accept such a role, although it would continue to impress that Jordan is not acting as a representative for the Palestinians but a partner in efforts to solve the 24-year old problem.

The sources commented that Europe would not reject the proposals and the United States might find in them an opportunity to bend to international calls for a peace conference dealing with the Middle East. In fact some of the sources said they believed that American intrasigence against Palestinian representation may actually be a pressure mechanism to reach this end.

Other proposals initially included in the reports of Mr. Abu-Sharif's interview with Sky News TV included calls for demilitarising the projected Palestinian state at least for a transitional period during which the United Nations would be responsible for security and holding democratic elections in which Palestinians would choose their leaders as well as their government.

The Jordanians opined that these two stipulations might have been called for by the citizens of the occupied territories through their leaders and PLO acceptance of these terms comes in compliance with the Palestinian people's wishes.

RJ Flight Denied Landing Permission at Jeddah

NC1503122391 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 15 Mar 91 p 1

[Text] Amman—Royal Jordanian [RJ] airline sources said yesterday that a RJ flight scheduled at 0400 today, Friday, to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, has been canceled. The flight had earlier been postponed from yesterday evening to 0400 this morning.

RJ sources said that aviation authorities in Saudi Arabia decided not allow the RJ plane to land at Jeddah Airport, without giving a reason, although the authorities had earlier agreed that RJ could resume its flights to Saudi airports.

It is worth noting that since last Tuesday [12 March], RJ resumed its flights to Arabian Gulf airports from Queen Alia International Airport after the end of the Gulf war. Meanwhile, RJ canceled the fees it had added to ticket prices.

However, Saudi authorities have allowed RJ planes to cross Saudi airspace en route to Gulf states. Planes bound for Muscat had flown over Egypt, Sudan, and Yemen on their way to the Sultanate of Oman.

UNICEF Sends Iraq Medical, Other Supplies

JN1103131891 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 11 Mar 91 p 3

[Text] Amman (J.T.)—Three cargo planes chartered for United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) by Royal Jordanian and carrying 89 tonnes of medical and other emergency supplies valued at $1 million and destined for Iraq, started landing at Queen Alia International Airport Sunday. The supplies will be off loaded immediately onto 10 trucks standing by the airport to haul supplies directly to UNICEF Baghdad, for joint distribution with the Iraqi government.

The shipments, donated by UNICEF and World Health Organisation (WHO), include essential drugs, medical kits and equipment, vaccines, cold chain equipment including refrigerators and generators, as well as collapsible water tanks, water purification chemicals, and water testing kits.

The items in the shipment, already cleared by the U.N. Security Council Sanctions Committee, had been recommended by the UNICEF/WHO mission which a fortnight ago paid a week-long visit to Iraq to ascertain the medical and hygiene needs of Iraqi women, children and the aged, and to assess the health situation of Iraqi civilians in general. The same joint UNICEF/WHO team had also led a 12-truck convoy carrying 54 tonnes of medicine and medical supplies to Iraq.

At the end of its mission, the WHO-UNICEF team submitted a report on its findings to the U.N. secretary general, highlighting the immediate medical and health needs of the Iraqi civilian population. The report suggested prompt action to support repairs to the damaged water and sanitation networks before temperatures rise in Iraq.

Jordan, Libya Send Relief

JN1203113391 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 12 Mar 91 p 3

[Text] Amman (J.T.)—The Jordan National Red Crescent Society (JNRCS) Monday sent its 16th convoy of trucks with relief supplies to Baghdad and said representatives of six humanitarian organisations accompanied the mission.

In addition to these, the Libyan Red Crescent Society Monday [11 March] sent 33 tonnes of milk to Baghdad to be distributed in conjunction with the Iraqi Red Crescent Society.

Representatives of the foreign humanitarian organisations held a meeting with the JNRCS vice president, Dr. Muhammad al-Hadid, to discuss various needs of the Iraqi people under the present circumstances. The delegates, who represent Oxfam, the British and American chapter of the Save the Children Organisation, the Tunisian Social Development Organisation and the Libyan National Red Crescent Society discussed with Dr. al-Hadid means of providing water purification equipment and medicine to Iraq.

Earlier, JNRCS President Ahmad Abu-Qurah met in his office with a delegation representing the Japanese Socialist Party to discuss the situation in Iraq in the aftermath of the devastating war there. The head of the delegation expressed his group's readiness to provide assistance to the Iraqi people through the JNRCS.

After meeting Abu-Qurah, the delegation members visited the Red Crescent Society's evacuees camp in al-Azraq and were briefed on the services to the foreign nationals fleeing Kuwait and Iraq on their way to be repatriated.

Meanwhile, further convoys of trucks carrying relief supplies donated by the Jordanian people continued to reach Iraq. In al-Tafilah it was announced Monday that the first convoy of six trucks laden with 40 tonnes of food supplies were on their way to Baghdad, and in South al-Shunah, near the Dead Sea, it was announced that 28 tonnes of food supplies were sent Monday to Iraq.

In Amman, the Arab Emergency Health Committee said that it had sent yet another consignment of food supplies and medicines to the Iraqi people.

In al-Salt, Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported Monday that the staff of al-Husayn hospital had raised JD [Jordanian dinar] 2,765 in donations to the Iraqi people and three trucks, laden with food, were sent to Baghdad by the local branch of the People's Committee for Supporting the Iraqi people.

Brotherhood Urges Iraq To Adopt Multiparty System

NC1403003891 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 13 Mar 91 p 3

[By Maryam M. Shahin, JORDAN TIMES staff reporter]

[Text] Amman—The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan says it has been closely watching the ongoing events in the southern regions of Iraq in the wake of the Gulf war and is urging the Iraqi government to opt for a multiparty system to help end the current disturbances and prevent the country from total collapse.

"If the Iraqi government wants to defuse the present explosive situation, the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan believes that the door must be thrown wide open for all political groups in Iraq to come forward and take part in the government in a democratic manner," said the group's official spokesman Ziyad Abu-Ghanimah.

We believe that the single greatest weapon that the current government of Iraq has right now is to open the doors to democracy and thus prove null and void the interference of its enemies who are using the frustrations of the opposition groups in order to destroy Iraq from within," Abu-Ghanimah told the Jordan Times.

The continuation of a one-party rule under the Ba'thists, Abu-Ghanimah said, will only weaken Iraq in the long run since "it would lay the ground work for opposition parties which could albeit unintentionally hurt Iraq's national interests."

Despite this criticism, Abu-Ghanimah did not express open support for the rebels in southern and northern Iraq.

"We call on the opposition parties to consider the special circumstances in which they find themselves and consider the national interests of Iraq," he said.

"It is the Americans and the Zionists and their 'coalition partners' that will benefit from the divisions in Iraq, no one else," Abu-Ghanimah said.

But Abu-Ghanimah also stressed that the Iraqi government must address the long standing grievances of banned political parties in Iraq, the Islamic parties in particular.

While many critics of the Muslim Brotherhood claim that the brotherhood supported Iraq in the Gulf crisis for the most part because "the man in the street supported Iraq and the party did not want to lose its constituency," Abu-Ghanimah says otherwise. "The Muslim Brotherhood has been banned in Iraq, banned and persecuted. But in the moment of need we stood with Iraq because the interest of the nation as a whole came first," he said.

According to Abu-Ghanimah the brotherhood has historically put national interests before party interests in times of outside aggression. Citing the example of Egypt, Abu-Ghanimah said Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir was "our greatest persecutor but the moment the Americans and Zionists aggressed Egypt we stood on 'Abd-al-Nasir's side because the nation comes first."

A brotherhood delegation met for the first time with Saddam Husayn and members of his government during the Gulf crisis and discussed, among other things, the future of their brethern in Iraq. "We stressed that if Iraq leaves Kuwait the coalition partners will no longer have an excuse to attack Iraq and we asked that Islamic parties be given the freedom to operate freely in Iraq," Abu-Ghanimah said.

"Nothing has happened yet, but five members of the brotherhood who had been on death row were given a personal pardon by Saddam Husayn," Abu-Ghanimah said.

The position of the brotherhood towards the rebelling Muslim parties in the south, which are Shi'ites and not as the brotherhood Sunni Muslims, leaves the door open to a future role both with the current government and the rebels.

Paper Doubts U.S. Sincerity, Emphasizes Action

NC1403052491 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 13 Mar 91 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "Deeds, Not Words, Are Important"]

[Text] Reports about the "very positive meeting" between Palestinian figures from the occupied Arab territories and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker create new hope for a more positive U.S. position on the Palestine question in particular and the Arab-Israeli conflict in general.

The PLO has welcomed President George Bush's four-point plan which is based on the principle of land for peace and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolutions Nos. 242 and 338 as the embodiment of the will of the international community out of its natural concern to obtain a just and comprehensive peace that guarantees the Palestinian people's legitimate political rights to establish their national entity on the soil of their occupied homeland.

During the dialogue between the Palestinian figures from the occupied land and the U.S. secretary of state, it was clear that the sons of the occupied land spoke with one voice which reflected the political trend among the Palestinian people and their leadership inside and outside the occupied land.

These figures conveyed to Secretary Baker the voice of the Palestinian people who are committed to their inalienable national rights and who seek a just and honorable peace that does not encroach on their rights or mortgage them to the expansionist Israeli ambitions which seek to efface the identity of the Palestinian people and their occupied land as well as their right to enjoy the same rights as other peoples when it comes to self-determination and the establishment of an independent entity in their homeland.

The dialogue between Baker and these figures reflected an indirect dialogue between the U.S. Government and the PLO—a dialogue that Washington severed in response to Zionist pressure—at which the figures from the occupied territories stressed their commitment to the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and to the application of international legitimacy in the Palestine question in the same way it was done with the Gulf issue.

Washington's welcome of the "encouraging" results and the "progress" made in the Palestinian-U.S. dialogue indicates that the prospects for peace in the region may be considerably brighter, providing that the intransigent position of the extreme right-wing Shamir government, which rejects any real and sincere movement toward a just and comprehensive peace, can be overcome.

The hopes raised by this dialogue face two main obstacles, however. The first is Israel's rejection of the land for peace principle, its insistence on maintaining the Judaization status quo in the occupied land, and its opposition to U.S. diplomatic moves and the idea of holding an international peace conference. The second obstacle lies in the doubts about the sincerity of the U.S. moves and about Washington's ability to bring real pressure to bear on Tel Aviv to force it to accept President Bush's plan, especially the implementation of the international resolutions, its withdrawal from the occupied land, and the abandonment of the expansionist settlements policy.

The hopes raised by the U.S.-Palestinian dialogue are tied to greater hopes that the burst of activity on the part of U.S. diplomacy in the wake of the aggression against Iraq is not just talk or political manipulation intended to divert attention from what is taking place against fraternal Iraq in light of the exposure of conspiracies against its sovereignty and the unity of its land and people. It is hoped that this is not an attempt to deflect the Arabs from their objectives by counting on the passage of time and the weakness of our memory to cause us to forget the U.S. crime against Iraq and its people, a crime perpetrated under the cover of international legitimacy and UN resolutions.

The statements filled with cordiality and hypocrisy and the positions declared by James Baker to please the Israelis in essence contradict the declared positions of U.S. policy and openly ignore the international calls for Israel to commit itself to the Security Council resolutions and international law.

The two-faced U.S. policy raises doubts and brings to mind the U.S. monopolizing approach to a solution of the Palestine question. This policy will only lead to more disappointments, setbacks, confrontations, and wars.

If Washington is sincere this time in seeking peace, then it has clearly and openly heard the Palestinian voice and position. It is also fully aware of the real nature of Israel's intentions and ambitions which contradict all laws and international norms.

What counts now are deeds, not words.

Reportage on Minister's Talks With Baker

Buwayz Senses U.S. Willing To Help

NC1403204291 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1615 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Lebanon's Foreign Minister Mr. Faris Buwayz and his delegation left Damascus this afternoon. Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' was on hand at Damascus' western entrance to see them off.

Speaking to reporters shortly before his departure, Buwayz said the al-Ta'if agreement envisages the disbandment of Palestinian militias as well as the Lebanese groups. Al-Buwayz sensed the stirrings of a serious American attitude toward an enforcement of UN Security Council Resolution 425 calling for Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. Buwayz said he also sensed an undoubted willingness on the part of the United States to help Lebanon and that Washington will impress on its friends in and outside of Lebanon the importance of backing the Lebanese Government and its plans.

Briefs Al-Hirawi on Talks

NC1403204491 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Foreign Minister Buwayz returned to Beirut from Damascus at 1700 today. He then headed for the temporary presidential office in al-Ramlah al-Bayda' accompanied by Lebanese Ambassador to Washington Eng. Michel Lahhud. Buwayz briefed President Ilyas al-Hirawi on the results of the Lebanese-American and Lebanese-Syrian talks. [passage omitted]

Karami Comments on Talks

NC1403222091 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 2000 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] As he was leaving Government House, Prime Minister 'Umar Karami was asked about the nature of the talks Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz held with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker in Damascus. Karami responded by saying: As we expected and as we have always maintained, the United States supports the implementation of the al-Ta'if accord in its entirety; it supports Lebanon's reunification and the Lebanese state. There are several domestic issues the Lebanese Government must decide in order to (?expedite) the process of (?liberating) Lebanon, restore cohesion among the Lebanese people, assert the Lebanese (?will), and build a military establishment that becomes a national institution able to play a vigorous and effective role to safeguard the security of the Lebanese state within and along its internationally recognized borders.

Asked about the implementation of Resolution 425, Karami said: There are certain first steps which must precede the implementation of this resolution. These steps must be completed by the Lebanese Government, but there is no magic wand it can wave. Therefore, we as key political officials must cooperate and eliminate the causes of the occupation of the border strip in southern Lebanon. We will spare no effort to take the appropriate measures. As I have always maintained, however, this can only be achieved by cooperation among all parties to move the process in this direction.

Karami: Phalangists May Join Government

NC1503074991 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Prime Minister 'Umar Karami has said that he will travel to Damascus in the coming hours to hold discussions with Syrian officials on the latest developments, especially after Baker's visit to Damascus. Prime Minister Karami said that after the time of his visit to Damascus is set, the next Cabinet meeting will also be scheduled.

Regarding the boycott by Minister George Sa'adah, Prime Minister Karami said that the day before yesterday he met with Minister Sa'adah, who is awaiting a decision by the Phalangist Political Bureau, which will decide on the question of his participating in the government tomorrow or at the beginning of next week.

Israelis Strike Syrian Social Nationalist Position

NC1503103091 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1000 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Before going into the news in detail, we report on the air raid carried out at 1040 today by the Israeli Air Force against a position of the Syrian Social Nationalist Party in al-Murayjat, according to our correspondent. He said the location received direct hits. No human losses have been reported, however. REUTER had cited security sources as saying that the air raid took place this morning on locations in Qabb-Ilyas valley in the eastern al-Biqa'.

Seven Said Injured in Strike

NC1503105291 Paris AFP in English 1027 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Beirut, March 15 (AFP)—Israeli aircraft on Friday attacked two Palestinian bases near the Beirut-Damascus highway in central Lebanon, slightly injuring seven Palestinian fighters, correspondents reported.

In Israel a military spokesman said the planes struck a position used as a "staging area for (anti-Israeli) attacks" and returned safely from the mission.

Four Israeli F-15 fighter-bombers fired eight rockets that destroyed two positions operated by the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, a component of the Palestine Liberation Organization, correspondents said.

Abu-'Adawi, a spokesman for the group, said Palestinian combatants left the bases when the planes were spotted and took shelter in the bush.

The injuries were caused by flying pieces of rock, he added.

"By its continuing aggression, Israel is showing that it rejects a just solution to the Palestinian question," Mr. Abu-'Adawi charged.

Israel has now launched half a dozen raids on Lebanon since the start of the year.

PSF Site Said Target

NC1503112391 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1045 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Israeli warplanes raided military positions in the al-Biqa' valley at 1030 today. There were conflicting reports about the identity of the attacked military positions. According to media reports, the raid targeted a position of the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front [PSF], leaving four people dead. The raid took place in two sorties during which the raiding aircraft fired 12 missiles. Other sources, however, said that the raid targeted the Syrian Social Nationalist Party in al-Murayjat valley, scoring direct hits on a building.

REUTER reported that the raid took place on positions in Qabb-Ilyas valley, near Shtawrah, in the eastern al-Biqa' valley.

Foreign Minister: U.S. Envoy Might Return 'Soon'

NC1503112091 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1000 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] [Foreign Minister Faris] Buwayz said yesterday that the United States was interested in helping to implement [UN] Resolution 425 and had shown its complete readiness to support the implementation of al-Ta'if agreement in all its items. He said that U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker might come back to Beirut soon. He noted U.S. readiness to suggest to some international sides the reactivation of the international fund for supporting Lebanon.

Palestinians Urged To Strike To Support PLO

NC1503095391 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] The command of the PLO's groups in the South and the people's committees in the Sidon area have called on the residents of 'Ayn al-Hulwah camp and the Sidon area to stage a general strike today to express their support for the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

Defense Minister on Syrian Presence, Withdrawals

NC1303101591 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0915 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] Prime Minister 'Umar Karami met with Defense Minister Michel al-Murr before noon today. Minister al-Murr said that the Syrian presence in Lebanon is necessary at present because it is supporting the legitimate Army and security forces in consolidating the Lebanese state's authority. He indicated that the al-Ta'if agreement provided for programming the solution in Lebanon and that the government is doing this. He said that [Syrian] withdrawals are stipulated in the al-Ta'if agreement and that the government will implement the al-Ta'if agreement in full.

Syria Releases Last Detained 'Awn Supporters

NC1103093391 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 0615 GMT 11 Mar 91

[Text] Syria yesterday released Lebanese officers who had been detained following the 13 October operation [to overthrow General Michel 'Awn]. The president of the Republic received the officers in the presence of Defense Minister Michel al-Murr, Army Commander Emile Lahhud, and Intelligence director Colonel Khalil al-Jalbut.

[Paris Monte Carlo Radio in Arabic at 0500 GMT on 11 March adds: "An official source said that Syria yesterday turned over to the Lebanese authorities the last seven Lebanese officers, supporters of General Michel 'Awn, whom it had been holding for five months. Lebanese President al-Hirawi received the seven officers yesterday afternoon after Defense Minister Michel al-Murr greeted them at the Lebanese-Syrian border. An official source said that the officers' release was in response to a request made by President al-Hirawi to Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad at their last meeting in Damascus on 27 February."]

Shells Defused Near Public Security Building

NC1203210191 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 1630 GMT 12 Mar 91

[Text] The Information Department at the Ministry of National Defense has issued the following statement: The Army Command has asked property owners in the commercial sector of the capital to wait for 10 days, beginning 12 March, to give the Army sufficient time to continue its efforts to clear mines and open all roads. This is aimed at ensuring their safety and facilitating the work of engineering units.

Security reports said a land mine exploded in the al-Dabbak area this morning, necessitating the amputation of a citizen's leg. At 1400 today, explosive disposal expert Muhammad Idris dismantled 11 120-, 82-, and 60-caliber mortar shells in the vicinity of the Public Security Department building.

Communist TV To Begin 'Experimental Transmission'

NC1203152491 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 11 Mar 91 p 7

[From "The First News" Column]

[Text] The Communist Party television (New Television) will begin its experimental transmission this month. Its director general is Hanna Salih, the director general of the Communist Voice of the People. This television will be a stock company with the Communist Party holding the most shares.

SANA Reports Baker-Al-Shar' News Conference

NC1403191891 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1625 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Damascus, 14 Mar (SANA)—U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, his wife, and their delegation left Damascus this afternoon following a two-day visit to Syria. He was seen off at Damascus International Airport by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' and his wife; the directors of the Foreign Ministry's America and Protocol Departments; Walid al-Mu'allim, Syria's ambassador to Washington; and U.S. Ambassador to Syria Edward Djerejian and the U.S. Embassy staff.

Faruq al-Shar' and James Baker held a news conference at Damascus International Airport prior to Baker's departure, which was attended by a large number of Arab and international media correspondents. [passage omitted]

Answering a question on what will happen if Israel refuses to comply with UN resolutions, particularly in the wake of the U.S. President's recent statement that the United States will move toward peace with the same intensity it used in the Gulf war, James Baker said: I do not believe that we must assume that the countries directly concerned with the issue will not contribute effectively to the peace process during this opportunity that has become available to us. Baker said he is confident that the Israeli Government has a strong desire to attain peace and that he sensed this during his visit to Israel.

Baker added that the U.S. President was clear in his address to the U.S. Congress when he said that the United States will strongly support a comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

On the issue of not holding talks between the U.S. Government and the Iraqi opposition, Baker said the matter of what kind of Iraqi Government comes to power in the wake of the Gulf crisis is something that concerns the Iraqi people and it is they who must decide it. He said: I will comment no further on this issue.

Regarding the Scud missiles that have been sent to Syria, Baker commented: We received information that Syria has received a shipment of Scud missiles. This issue was discussed at length since it pertains to the efforts to deal with the problem of mass destruction weapons.

Asked why Syria is continuing to ask for deliveries of these missiles, al-Shar' answered: We are still in a state of war with Israel, which possesses various types of weapons of mass destruction. A comprehensive peace will resolve all these issues. We are looking forward to seeing our region free of weapons of mass destruction.

Answering a question on the joint desire to pursue efforts to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, Baker said: As I made clear during my tour of the region, we are dealing with a very sensitive issue, and we cannot let ourselves be carried too far from reality by our hopes. It is still too early to attempt to deal with this issue, right after the war. What is important now is that there is a change in the region as a result of what happened in the Gulf and I believe that all the concerned countries wish to exploit this opportunity to achieve progress. This is what the situation must be like if we want to establish a stable peace in the region.

Baker added that no one can impose peace in the Middle East if the parties to the conflict do not wish to attain a true and sincere reconciliation. He said he believes that an opportunity exists to achieve a real reconciliation among these parties.

Asked if other Arab countries accept Israel now, Baker replied: I do not understand this question. There is one country which has a state of peace with Israel. We need to get the process moving so that there will be a total peace between Israel and the Arabs. You have to crawl before you walk and you must learn to walk before you run. After six days of touring the region, I feel that the time is still not ripe for an immediate peace.

Baker added: This issue is unusually difficult. It is a very difficult matter.

Baker said that in the wake of the statement the Israeli prime minister made following Baker's visit to Israel, he believes that it is important to reach a certain degree of agreement between the United States and Syria in dealing with this issue and between the United States and the eight Arab countries [Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf Cooperation Council members].

Baker continued: You might not see a success in this or might perhaps believe that some progress has been made or that perhaps things will become bad tomorrow. Nevertheless, let us give peace a chance. The United States wants to deal with the issue and exploit the opportunity.

Asked if using influence and good offices would be of use with Israel, Baker said: I hope so. We certainly believe that as a strong ally of Israel, we must help it to understand that no party will benefit as much as Israel if a genuine reconciliation is attained.

Asked if he sees any new ideas in what Yitzhaq Shamir says, Baker remarked: I have heard what the Israeli prime minister's press spokesman stated after my meeting with him. I believe that he wishes to embark on new and effective action in the wake of the crisis to search for peace.

Asked if he believes there is more agreement now between the two sides than there used to be in the past, Baker answered: Yes, but I will not go into details. It is still too early for that.

Baker expressed the belief that the Israeli Government is concerned with achieving peace rapidly and effectively. He added: I hope the same holds true for the Arab parties to the conflict.

Told that everyone knows that the majority of the Arab governments are not democratic, but what about the people, Baker replied: This question was raised on 3 August 1990, when they said that the region would erupt and matters would get out of hand. Nevertheless, the stand adopted by the eight Arab countries along with the other coalition countries against the aggression was successful. I do not think that [an eruption] will happen.

Asked about the difference between Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, Baker said: Do I see a difference? Yes, I certainly do.

Al-Shar' commented on this question by saying: I do not believe so. Mr. Baker is now speaking about the importance of using a single standard, namely the UN Security Council resolutions, to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, but he is referring to the difference in the way in which the events happened. However, we agree in principle that international legitimacy and UN Security Council resolutions must be adhered to and implemented with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question.

Al-Shar' asserted: I believe we must stop using a double standard in dealing with issues, and for this reason we are optimistic about the future. He expressed optimism that the peace process in the region will be given impetus.

Asked if there is a time limit to the opportunity he spoke about, Baker said: Actually, we do not know the answer. We do not know how long the window will remain open. For this reason, I believe that we must work effectively and do our best in order to exploit the available situation.

At the end of the news conference, al-Shar' said: Mr. Baker's visit to Damascus and the talks he held yesterday with President Hafiz al-Asad and with me were positive and constructive. This will help us to work effectively to attain a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue. We are optimistic that this opportunity will be utilized in the appropriate manner. We do not want to see the post-Gulf crisis era become the same as the pre-Gulf crisis era. For this reason, we will maintain contact in order to give impetus to the peace process in the coming months.

Al-Shar' Comments on Baker Talks

NC1503083791 Beirut Domestic Service in Arabic 0530 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Remarks by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' to unidentified reporter on "the results of talks with Baker"; date, place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Al-Shar'] President Hafiz al-Asad and Mr. James Baker discussed the situation in Lebanon. Their views were identical on the need to support the national reconciliation march and follow the articles of the al-Ta'if agreement to the letter. They also expressed deep commitment to help Lebanon realize peace and stability and to get the Israeli forces to withdraw from the south.

[Reporter] And Resolution 425?

[Al-Shar'] Of course. What is meant here is implementation of Resolution 425.

[Reporter] Mr. Minister, what kind of readiness did the American secretary find in Syria to help end the Arab-Israeli conflict?

[Al-Shar'] We sensed an American determination to implement Security Council resolutions on the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is an important and positive step. We believe that continuing contacts and exchange of views, whether between Syria and the other Arab countries that signed the Damascus Declaration, or between Syria and the United States and the rest of the Security Council's permament members, will help immensely to get things moving toward the realization of a just and permanent peace in the region.

Al-Asad Receives UK State Minister Hogg

NC1403132891 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1215 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Douglas Hogg, British minister of state for foreign and Commonwealth affairs, and his accompanying delegation at 1230 today. Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for external relations, attended the meeting. The meeting included a discussion about developments in the region following the Gulf events and the need to work for the implementation of the UN resolutions concerning the region.

People's Assembly Speaker 'Abd-al-Qadir Qaddurah received Hogg earlier in the presence of Shakir al-Sa'id, chairman of the People's Assembly's Committee on Arab and External Affairs, and the UK ambassador to Damascus.

Hogg on Talks With Iraqi Opposition

NC1403190391 Damascus SANA in Arabic 1715 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Damascus, 14 Mar (SANA)—Douglas Hogg, British minister of state for foreign and Commonwealth affairs, and his delegation left Damascus this afternoon following a three-day visit to Syria.

Nasir Qaddur, minister of state for foreign affairs, and the directors of the Foreign Ministry's Europe and Protocol Departments saw him off at Damascus International Airport.

Nasir Qaddur and Douglas Hogg held a news conference at Damascus airport before the latter's departure. It was attended by several Arab and foreign journalists. They spoke about the outcome of Minister Hogg's visit to Syria and his talks with Syrian officials on various issues of mutual concern.

Hogg said: My visit to Syria is very important, particularly since it has provided me with a great opportunity to meet with President Hafiz al-Asad. He noted that the objective of his visit is to reiterate his government's interest in the resumption of relations with the Syrian Government and in further promoting these ties in a serious and effective manner. He said that he has discussed with Syrian officials a number of issues concerning the region's affairs. Responding to a question, Hogg decribed his talks with the Iraqi opposition as fruitful.

Hogg expressed his gratitude to the Syrian Government for the great efforts it has made and continues to make to bring about the release of hostages held in Lebanon.

Answering a question about the role that will be played by the European states and Britain if Israel does not comply with the UN resolutions pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Hogg said: We believe that there are important principles that must be complied with and must be taken into consideration, particularly Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 to achieve a final settlement. He added that the Israelis need to realize the importance of the land for peace principle. There will be no security for them if they continue to occupy the Arab territories. They also must recognize the Palestinians' right to self-determination. He emphasized the role of the Western countries in convincing the Israelis of the need to accept the principles stipulated in the Security Council resolutions. Hogg pointed to Syria's desire to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

For his part, Nasir Qaddur stressed the importance of Hogg's talks with Syrian officials, particularly those concerning the relations between the two countries. He said: Both of us have demonstrated our desire to promote and develop our bilateral relations in the future in the interest of the two peoples and countries.

Qaddur went on to say that the talks dealt with the issue of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the need for the international community, which had united its stands for implementing and establishing international legitimacy during the Kuwait crisis, to show the same enthusiasm for implementing the UN resolutions that are related to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Qaddur stressed Syria's viewpoint that there must be a single criterion for implementing UN resolutions connected with the convening of an international conference for peace in the Middle East with the participation of all the parties concerned under UN auspices as well as regarding the resolutions related to the Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territories and the guarantee of the national rights of the Palestinian people.

Qaddur underlined the efforts that Syria has made and continues to make to bring about the release of hostages, stressing that Syria will continue its endeavors to ensure their release and alleviate their suffering.

Iraqi Army Reportedly Uses Gas Against Rebels

NC1503082791 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 0515 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] al-Hasakah—Iraqi brothers arriving in the al-Hun camp in al-Hasakah have said that ferocious battles between the popular uprising forces and the Iraqi regime's troops have spread to most Iraqi cities. They asserted that popular antiregime demonstrations are growing, despite the oppressive and inhuman methods used by the forces of that regime to suppress the uprising.

Upon arrival in the camp, an Iraqi refugee told a SANA correspondent in al-Hasakah that the Iraqi regime is using the most repulsive measures against the Iraqi people, ignoring the masses' will and their rejection of what the Baghdad ruler has done to Iraq and the Arab nation.

Citizen Sulayman of Baghdad said the regime's forces have used chemical weapons against insurgents in certain Iraqi cities. He added that the forces used mustard gas in al-Basrah, killing hundreds and displacing dozens of families.

The citizen added that opposition forces have gained control of several Iraqi cities and villages and that the government forces failed more than once to regain control of the cities of Khanaqin and al-Basrah because the popular revolution is growing both in scale and strength.

Iraqi citizen Hirmiz of Baghdad stated that large-scale clashes took place in the cities of al-Najaf, Karbala', al-Basrah, al-'Amarah, al-Sulaymaniyah, al-Kut, Shalhah, and al-Kaziliyah between the opposition and elements of the Republican Guards who are loyal to the regime. He said the Republican Guards used artillery and rocket fire against demonstrators in these cities, destroying several homes and killing scores of innocent people.

The citizen said that several soldiers and military personnel, including high-ranking officers, have joined the opposition. He added that demonstrators burned pictures of the president of the Iraqi regime and wrote slogans on walls denouncing the barbaric measures used against the people.

Citizen Fu'ad of Dahuk said he saw several tanks and armored cars heading toward northern cities that are under the opposition's control in Dinarta and (Bir Dirsin) in al-Mawsil Governorate, in an attempt to regain control over these areas and to suppress the uprising. He asserted that the area of Barzan in Dahuk is now under the control of the popular forces.

Citizen Mahir of al-Mawsil said living conditions in Iraq have become very difficult and that the people are dissatisfied with the situation in Iraq as a result of the Iraqi ruler's actions.

Peace Conference 'Best Framework' for Regional Peace

NC1403170091 Damascus Domestic Service in Arabic 1230 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Station commentary]

[Text] Gentlemen: Right now, the Arab-Zionist conflict is at the forefront of international problems. World and regional forces are making clear efforts to tackle the complexities of this conflict, complexities which make the conflict an imminent threat to the region and to regional security and stability. In this serious climate whose features are being outlined through a string of high-level political contacts, meetings, and deliberations, the principles of justice and peace are bolstered. Likewise, formulas and ideas based on international legitimacy—formulas and ideas whose content is derived from UN resolutions and whose frameworks are woven from the desire of nations and peoples for security and peace—are being discussed openly.

Throughout all phases of the conflict, we have always believed that only the principles of justice can rid the region of the nightmares of wars, that is, if they were to be put into effect and if they were heeded by the Zionist enemy. Likewise, we have always been clear in defining the limits of justice and injustice in a conflict which was basically nurtured by a clear injustice supported by sheer might, nourished by greed, and inflated by the delusions nursed by previous decades of Zionist imagination.

The alphabet of justice stipulates that the rightful owner should regain his rights and that the usurper should relinquish what he has usurped. Additionally, the clear resolutions passed by international legitimacy when it tackled this conflict should be the criteria to be observed under all circumstances and conditions. Those who are aware of the resolutions passed by the world body on the Arab-Zionist conflict over the past decades are undoubtedly aware of the magnitude of injustice that was done to us when these resolutions remained ink on paper and when Israel threw them overboard and developed its aggressive approach toward seizing new territory, displacing other Arabs, building new settlements, and receiving hundreds of thousands of new immigrants from various parts of the globe and recruiting them as *fighters against the Arabs in the ugliest expansionist*-settler scheme known in the history of the world.

We, like the rest of the world, advocate and observe justice. And because we are aware of our rights and defend them, just like other peoples and nations which neither forfeit their rights nor relinquish their freedom, we have adhered to all our positions which never contravened the legitimate right of self-defense and which never violated or contradicted international legitimacy. As for Israel, it has continued to complicate the crisis, push the region to new war dangers, and to put the world on the verge of an all-out confrontation.

The regional situation, in a climate that is eager for security and stability in keeping with world security and stability, is nowadays experiencing intensive activities to address all regional problems and to devise proper solutions to them on the basis of international legitimacy. Leader al-Asad repeatedly affirmed that any solution to the Arab-Zionist conflict should be based on UN resolutions, particularly on Resolutions 242 and 338, and that the peace process should be given great momentum. The peace process will not be just unless it produces a complete Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab lands and ensures the restoration of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including their rights to self-determination and to establish an independent state on their national soil.

An international peace conference on the Middle East conflict is nowadays the best framework for discussing steps to achieve a just and comprehensive solution at a time when viewing all unresolved issues in our world from the same perspective and using the same standards has become a necessity. Justice should be done wherever there is a need for it. Moreover, international legitimacy must be honored wherever there is a need for it to force its will and implement its resolutions. The world will find us, as we have always been, lovers of peace who believe that peace must be established so that justice can be done to us and to the entire world for the sake of mankind's welfare, progress, and prosperity.

Afghanistan

Najibullah Decree on Constituency Elections

LD1403090891 Kabul Domestic Service in Pashto 1530 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] The presidential press office has told BAKHTAR that esteemed Najibullah, president of Afghanistan, has issued the following decree on elections to be held in some constituencies for the Wolasi Jerga and the Sena of the Meli Shura of the Republic of Afghanistan:

1. In accordance with the Artice 54 of the Law on Elections for the Meli Shura of the Republic of Afghanistan, elections to the Wolasi Jerga will be held in constituencies 8, 10, 15, 18, and 19 of the city of Kabul, constituencies 142 and 143 of Kabul Province, constituency 189 of Nangarhar Province, constituency 159 of Qandahar Province, and constituency 105 of Khowst Province. Elections to the Sena will be held in constituency 28 of Zabol Province, constituency 45 of Qandahar Province, constituency 51 of Lowgar Province, constituency 34 of Ghowr Province, and constituency 55 of Nimruz Province, between 9 and 14 April 1991.
2. The executive committees of the delegates' councils in the relevant provinces should set up provincial and regional election commissions and election centers.
3. The Council of Ministers should transfer the necessary sums of money to the relevant provinces for election costs in the above constituencies.

[Signed] Najibullah, president of Afghanistan

Najibullah Receives Peace Front Chairman

LD1503103891 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0457 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Kabul, March 14, BAKHTAR—Najibullah, president of the Republic of Afghanistan received the member of the executive board of the council of the Afghanistan Peace Front, APF, at the Presidential Headquarters today.

While touching on the APF tasks, President Najibullah said in the prevailing complicated military-political conditions of the country, comprehensive and tireless efforts are needed. For this reason, it will be better if the APF, as a gathering centre of all political, national, and peace-loving forces and as a mobiliser of the scattered activities and endeavours of the different political forces, play an active role in the termination of war and ensurance of peace in the country.

Mutually, Mawlawi Nasrullah Hanifi, chairman of the council of the APF has assured the Afghan leader that the front will not refrain from any kind of endeavours for the restoration of peace and reaching inter-Afghan understandings. It vigorously emphasises on the principles of reaching understandings.

Bangladesh

Saudi Ambassador Praises Stance on Gulf Crisis

BK1403131291 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh External Service in English 1230 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Bangladesh will be remembered as a great friend of Saudi Arabia and the Muslim ummah for its role in the Gulf war. This was stated by Saudi Ambassador 'Abd-al-Latif al-Maymani when he called on Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed in Dhaka on Thursday [14 March]. Mr. al-Maymani described Bangladesh as the second biggest [Muslim] country in the world and highly appreciated its help and assistance in ending the illegal occupation of Kuwait.

The acting president reciprocated the sentiments of the ambassador and expressed his belief that the custody of the two holy places of Mecca and Medina will remain in proper hands. He said Bangladesh will be happy to extend all cooperation to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in their reconstruction and development activities.

The acting president referred to the problems of Bangladeshi workers in Saudi Arabia who remained stranded here due to the expiry of their entry visas following the suspension of the flight to and from Saudi Arabia during the war. The Saudi ambassador assured that this and other similar problems will get immediate attention of Saudi Government.

India

Assam Governor Resigns; No Reasons Given

BK1503091091 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Agency reports from Guwahati say that the Assam and Arunachal Pradesh governor, Mr. D.D. Thakur, has resigned today. The reason for his resignation is not known. The former chief minister of Assam, Mr. Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, expressed surprise over the governor's resignation. He said the resignation came at a time when a move was on to initiate discussions with the ULFA [United Liberation Front of Assam].

Hindu Militants Step Up Campaign on Shrines

BK1503050491 Hong Kong AFP in English 0320 GMT 15 Mar 91

[By M.R. Narayan Swamy]

[Text] New Delhi, March 15 (AFP)—Hindu militants are stepping up their campaign to take over three ancient shrines also claimed by Moslems in what is seen as a deliberate prelude to upcoming Indian general elections.

Hindu organisations have called a religious parliament here next month followed by a mass rally expected to draw more than two million faithful, in support of demands that Moslems surrender the religious sites.

A Hindu leader said adherents of India's largest religion were determined to have their way. "Come what may, we are not going to give up our rights on the temples," said Baikunth Lal Sharma, who heads the New Delhi chapter of the powerful Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP, World Hindu Council). "We are determined," he said. "We want only those who speak for Hindus to govern this great Hindu land."

Critics see the VHP's threatening posture as part of a strategy to whip up Hindu passions ahead of national elections, expected in May following the dissolution of federal parliament Wednesday. Hindus constitute an overwhelming 80 percent of secular India's 850 million population. Moslems number more than 100 million and form the country's largest religious minority.

The VHP is spearheading a campaign to take over a crumbling 16th-century mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya, built during India's early Islamic era. Hindu militants say the Moghul King Babar built the mosque on the site after demolishing a temple of Hindu Lord Rama, reputed to have been born there. Moslems and some historians dispute this account.

The Ayodhya controversy has left hundreds dead in bloody Hindu-Moslem violence across India over the last two years. The VHP lays similar claims on two other shrines in the Hindu holy towns of Varanasi and Mathura. Hundreds of VHP supporters twice tried to storm and demolish the Ayodhya shrine last year in attempts thwarted by security forces, who opened fire killing a total of 24 people by official count.

On Tuesday [12 March], Purshottam Narain Singh, a senior VHP leader, asked Moslems to give up by April 4 claims on the three religious places of Ayodhya, Mathura and Varanasi, all in Uttar Pradesh State. "We will like to impress upon our Moslem brothers that they should gracefully hand over the sites in the interest of communal and national harmony," he told reporters in Ayodhya. Mr. Singh warned that if the Moslems refused to heed the request, Hindus would launch massive campaigns to "reclaim thousands of shrines which were temples but have been made mosques."

The deadline of April 4 coincides with the mass rally called by the VHP in New Delhi immediately after a two-day religious congregation expected to be attended by some 10,000 Hindu clerics and ascetics. "Our aim is to put pressure on the government," said Mr. Sharma, urging Hindus to hoist saffron VHP flags on their houses March 17 and prepare a list of "illegal mosques" by March 30.

The statements drew angry reactions from Moslem leaders and major political parties who charged the VHP with trying to help the Hindu-revivalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) in the coming elections. The BJP, one of India's best-organised political parties, has increasingly identified itself with the Hindu cause and won 86 seats in parliament in the November 1989 polls in its best performance ever. The BJP toppled Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh over the Ayodhya controversy by cutting off its legislative support for his minority government to protest his opposition to its Ayodhya crusade.

"The VHP is not interested in any temple. They are only interested in power," said M.J. Akbar, a Moslem and spokesman for former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Congress (I) Party. "All secular parties have expected the VHP to step up its campaign since elections have been announced," he said. "It betrays the element of desperation in the BJP."

Syed Shababuddin, a prominent Moslem leader, said: "We anticipate that in view of the imminence of the elections, the VHP is bound to hot up the campaign over the disputed shrines." "We do not regard the VHP or BJP as sole representatives of the Hindu community," he added. "We call upon the secular majority to assert itself against this march towards fascism."

Mr. Sharma admitted that the VHP found itself "closest to BJP" politically and said it would advise Hindus to vote for the party, treated by most other Indian political groups as a pariah because of its alleged communalist stance. The BJP's critics charge that the party is supporting the VHP campaign because it wants Hindus to vote en bloc for its candidates. "I don't think that is going to happen," said Muqumuddin Farooqi, a leader of the Communist Party of India, which bitterly opposes the BJP.

Court Releases Sri Lankan Tamil on Habeas Corpus

BK1403125791 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1230 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] The Madras High Court has held that no Sri Lankan Tamil can be detained without following the procedure prescribed by law. The court observed that the right to personal liberty enshrined in the Constitution extends even to aliens. A division bench of the High Court comprising Mr. Justice K.S. Mishra and Mr. Justice S. Janardhanam today ordered the release of a Sri Lankan Tamil on a habeas corpus petition.

Malaysia To Sell 1 Million Tons of Crude Oil

BK0803131891 Delhi Domestic Service in English 1030 GMT 8 Mar 91

[Text] India is to import 1 million tons of crude oil from Malaysia during the current year. A contract to this effect was finalized after three days of talks between the officials of the two countries in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. The Indian delegation to the talks included joint secretaries in the ministries of petroleum and commerce and representatives of Indian Oil Corporation and State Trading Corporation. India started importing crude oil from Malaysia following the Gulf crisis.

Article on Kuwait's Liberation, Gulf War Lesson

BK1003101491 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 1 Mar 91 p 1

[H.K. Dua article: "End of the War"]

[Text] Kuwait has won its freedom and the world should not grudge sending congratulations to its people who have lived through seven months of subjugation, agony and later, war. Saddam Husayn's attempt to grab Kuwait and declare it as a part of Iraq towards the close of the Twentieth Century was weird and an arrogant exercise of power. That it has been defeated and Kuwait's right to live as a free nation has been upheld is a matter of satisfaction for most people of the world.

The world, however, cannot compliment itself for finding itself totally inadequate to prevent Kuwait from being grabbed by Saddam Husayn and that it could not help Kuwait win back its freedom without a war. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait came as a rude shock; so has its inability to stop the war that, like any other military conflict, is bound to leave its debris—political, economic, social and psychological. No one at present can really know who will clear this debris and how, but the responsibility of the United States in this connection is going to be enormous.

President George Bush has certainly won the Persian Gulf war, equipped as he was with the muscle of a Super Power, the support of his allies in Europe and pliable regimes in West Asia. He can draw satisfaction from the fact that neither the Soviet Union, nor the United Nations, nor the Non-Aligned Movement could effectively intervene and block his way. President Bush's victory may be of some use to him when he seeks a second term for himself but it will be wrong for him to start gloating over it and nurse an "I-am-the-Greatest" feeling.

With victory and power goes responsiblity and a high degree of statesmanship will be required of President Bush to discharge it. While he has certainly proved to his people that he can coolly go about preparing for war, fight one and win it with skill and visible efficiency, whether he possesses the qualities of statesmanship needed after the war remains to be seen. There is a danger that he may confine himself to achieving the war aims he had set for his country—the liberation of Kuwait, the overthrow of Saddam Husayn, the destruction of Iraq's military machine, the imposition of a peace and security arrangement convenient for the Unites States on pliable regimes and through them control of oil. There are also wider aims of peace that he may need to pursue. Wars these days are won by high-tech and hardware; a wider vision of the world is necessary to win peace than what the Bush Administration is blessed with.

The Bush victory in the Persian Gulf war may be popular with many people in the United States and may even have impressed governments which are not fond of Washington and its ways. But the defeat of Saddam Husayn and his country are unlikely to be greeted with rose petals for President Bush in Baghdad. A defeat can always breed humiliation and a feeling of hurt and later, anger. The Arabs can be no exception. Anger has led Palestinians to believe that in terrorism lies their salvation; Washington and its allies cannot dismiss the fear that more Arabs will be consumed by the culture of the gun after Iraq's defeat. Is the West equipped to win the trust of those who till yesterday were shouting pro-Saddam slogans in the streets of Amman, Cairo and Rabat?

Also, the US Administration would miss an important historical opportunity if it delays the settlement of the Palestinian question which is the source of many tensions in West Asia. Israeli persuasion, and even pressure, can always be effective in Washington but the war in the Persian Gulf has made the settlement of the Palestinian question more urgent than before. Israeli euphoria and demoralised Palestinian psyche are going to be hurdles, but these will have to be crossed.

Different aspects of the war are going to be analysed by most governments in the world. But there is a particular need for the Soviet Union, the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement to ponder why they were of no consequence as the situation in the Persian Gulf drifted towards a blow-up whose outcome was a foregone conclusion. All of them gritted their teeth in their helplessness. Mr Mikhail Gorbachev has clearly left the impression that his keenness to have western investment and technology to sustain his perestroyka was too important for him to risk saying a "Nyet" [no] in the Security Council. Or has he struck a deal with Washington on the Baltic Republics? The United Nations behaved like a captive body, without a will of its own. The UN Secretary-General, Mr Perez de Cuellar has emerged as a pathetic figure on the international stage, beating a wing or so occasionally—and in vain. The Non-Aligned Movement has found to its horror how irrelevant it has become in a world which has ceased to be bi-polar now.

The Soviet Union, the United States and the European powers, particularly France, must also now look back and admit their mistake in giving arms to Saddam Husayn, fanning his ambitions to a point when he could invade a small neighbour believing that he could get away with it.

The war also holds an importgant lesson for the people of Iraq as also of other countries: Do not give too much power to any one man; it can go to the head, cause megalomania and lead to a disaster.

Iran

Student Detained in UK Released, Returns Home

NC1503071191 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0430 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Muslim Iranian student Mehrdad Kowkabi, who was finally released after 15 months of detention by the

British police when the charges brought against him were not proven, returned to Iran this morning. Mr. Mo'in, *minister of culture and higher education;* Hojjat-ol-Eslam Ezhe'i, representative of the vice regency of the supreme jurisconsult on affairs of students abroad; a number of Majles deputies; officials from various ministries; a large number of students and Tehran residents; and members of his family warmly welcomed him with flowers at Mehrabad Airport.

Speaking briefly to the people present, Mr. Kowkabi thanked the country's officials for his release. He also emphasized the need for the world's Muslims to carry out the decree of his eminence the imam, may his soul be sanctified, on the author of the blasphemous book "The Satanic Verses.

'Positive' Step in UK Ties

LD1403121191 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1104 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] The central court of London, which was pursuing Mehrdad Kowkabi's trial, closed his case. Mehrdad Kowkabi is returning to Iran after 15 months of detention. Mehrdad Kowkabi is an Iranian student who was studying in Britain. He was arrested together with three other students by the British police in the month of Azar last year [November-December 1989]. During his 15 months detention, the British court began his trial under completely unsuitable circumstances [as heard] in an attempt to prove that Mehrdad Kowkabi had committed a crime. But despite opening his case several times, the British police could not find evidence to condemn him. In his last trial, which lasted for 2 consecutive months, the court—which had in practice realized that Kowkabi was innocent—issued a verdict to the effect that as it is impossible to call witnesses for this case, the trial cannot continue, and Mehrdad Kowkabi's case is closed and he will be returned to Iran soon.

Although the failure of the British court to convict Mehrdad Kowkabi shows that this Iranian student is innocent, his release is nevertheless evaluated by the political experts as a positive and constructive step which can be effective in improving London-Tehran ties. Naturally, if Britain desires good ties with other countries, including Iran, it seems necessary that in view of the principle of mutual respect it should make up for such measures as the arrest of Mehrdad Kowkabi, where no evidence exists to justify it, and it should amend other similar records in the history of its relations.

Musavi-Ardebili Delivers Friday Prayers Sermons

LD1503114591 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Excerpt] On the last Friday of 1369 and on the threshold of the Koran's spring, the auspicious month of Ramadan, compatriot Muslims today held the political-religious ceremonies of Friday prayers across the country. Tehran's people likewise carried out the Friday prayers led by Ayatollah Musavi-Ardebili. In the second sermon, Tehran's interim Friday imam referred to the consequences of the devastating Persian Gulf war for the people of the region—especially for the innocent and Muslim people of Iraq and the concerns and problems confronting the people of Iraq and Kuwait. He said:

Creating military bases in the region and safeguarding the so-called security of the regime occupying Jerusalem are some of the objectives pursued by the United States in the region. In this way the regime occupying Jerusalem can perform its duty of being the gendarme in the way the United States wishes. But the United States, by such acts, increasingly fans the flames of anti- American sentiment among the Muslim people of the region, who have become disgusted with U.S. policies and strongly feel the meaning of the expression great Satan, which his eminence the imam [Khomeyni] used to apply to the United States.

In his second sermon, Ayatollah Musavi-Ardebili elaborated on the U.S. objectives that seek to exploit the situation created by the United States in Iraq. He said: Regional governments must be quite vigilant to prevent the dismemberment of Iraq at any cost; otherwise, the United States will implement its wicked policies in the region more forcefully. Tehran's interim Friday imam added: The United States works for its own interests, not the interests of the region's people. Hence, it has no rights in the Persian Gulf region security plan. Persian Gulf security must be maintained by the people of the region. The independence and territorial integrity of Iraq must be safeguarded, and the people of Iraq must have the right to decide their own fate. No one has the right to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs. [passage omitted]

President Continues Tour of Western Areas

Comments on Bakhtaran Visit

LD1403111691 Tehran IRIB Television Network in Persian 1600 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Excerpts] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani arrived in Bakhtaran this morning to visit the areas damaged during the imposed war and review the needs and the process of reconstruction of those areas. Our colleagues at the Bakhtaran Center sent a report about the president's visit. [passage omitted]

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Please tell us what objectives you will be following in your visit to Bakhtaran Province?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. This trip is specifically aimed at visiting the reconstruction programs of the war-stricken areas. We will, God willing, spend all the time visiting the reconstruction programs and reviewing the needs

and problems in the three provinces of Bakhtaran, Ilam, and Khuzestan. Meanwhile, I apologize right here to the people of these three provinces since because of the intensity of our schedule, there will be no time to visit the cities and meet the people. God willing, we will come to meet the people on another occasion. [end recording]

This morning our country's president, after arriving in Bakhtaran, set off for Sar-e Pol-e Zahab, where he attended the session of the city's administrative council. He was informed about the reconstruction of the region's agriculture, livestock farming, and development schemes. Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani then attended a gathering of the city's inhabitants who had learned of his visit, and he praised their resistance and self-sacrifice during the years of holy defense. [passage omitted]

Examines Reconstruction Efforts

LD1403115391 Tehran IRNA in English 0738 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Ilam, March 14, IRNA—President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani Wednesday afternoon arrived in Ilam and participated in a planning meeting for the two western provinces of Ilam and Bakhtaran.

The governors general of the two provinces presented a report of the damage to the two provinces during the eight-year war with Iraq. The two officials also offered a summary report of the needs of their respective provinces for human resources and investments in small industries.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani who arrived in the western border city of Bakhtaran on Wednesday on a tour of the three provinces of Bakhtaran, Ilam and Kordestan, damaged in the 1980-88 war, stressed the need for expediting development projects in Ilam Province saying that the province can rely on its own inherent resources. The governor general of Ilam said that the reconstruction operations for Ilam have already been completed and that in Dehloran of the total 43,00 damaged houses and business buildings 1,800 have now been rehabilitated, and that the rest will be rebuilt in another two years.

Later in a visit to Gilan-e Gharb and talking to a meeting with residents President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said the upcoming Iranian year (March 21) will mark a speedy rehabilitation of the entirety of the country.

He said the government administrators emphasize on the need for rehabilitating the country, but that until recently the situation did not warrant gross investments for infrastructural projects. He said the government is now responsible to pay more attention to the regions of the country whose people did more acts of self-sacrifice for the revolution.

Inspects Repaired Oil Pump Station

LD1403183591 Tehran IRNA in English 1639 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Dehloran, Ilam Prov., Mar. 14, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Thursday inspected Cheshmeh Farsh oil pumping station near this western border where he lauded Iranian oil experts for reconstruction of the war-damaged installations.

The station became operational in 1977 but with the start of the imposed war in 1980 its operation came to a halt. In the early days of the war the unit was destroyed and its equipment looted and taken to Iraq.

Reconstruction work on the unit first started in 1985 but it was again damaged in a heavy Iraqi air raid.

The president also hailed as "excellent" the success of oil experts in extinguishing burning oil wells near Dehloran, saying their ability to run the complicated oil industry was "a pride for the country."

Arrives in Khuzestan Province

LD1403183991 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Continuing his tour of war-damaged areas today, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani this afternoon arrived in Susangerd in Khuzestan Province and met a group of people of the city. According to the Central News Unit, in a short speech to a gathering of residents, the president expressed the hope that war-stricken areas will be quickly reconstructed. The people of Susangerd greeted the president with the slogan "Peace be upon Mohammad, welcome to the imam's friend."

Continuing his trip, the president also visited Bostan and was warmly greeted by the people of that city, especially the Arab tribespeople. At a gathering of the townsfolk who lined the main street, the president thanked the people for the expression of their goodwill and honored the memory of the self-sacrifices and devotedness of the martyrs, those missing in action, prisoners or war, and the selfless devotees. [passage omitted]

Assesses Abadan Reconstruction Program

LD1403221891 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 2030 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, the president, arrived in Abadan on Thursday evening to review progress in the reconstruction of Abadan and Khorramshahr. He was greeted at the airport by Hojjat ol-Eslam Musavi-Jazayeri, representative of the supreme jurisconsult in Khuzestan Province, and other provincial officials.

According to the Central News Unit, after visitng the various sites under construction in Abadan and Khorramshahr, the president attended a session of the planning and reconstruction council of Khuzestan Province.

In that session, attended by the ministers of construction jihad, road, transportation, and agriculture, the head of the Planning and Budget Commission, and the Friday imam of Ahvaz, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani stressed the need to accelerate and expand reconstruction. The president said we must accept more than what we had forecast for reconstruction. God willing, we shall be able.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani added that 105 billion rials of credit have been set aside for the reconstruction of Khuzestan Province. If any constraints are felt, the required credit will be provided in the future. [passage omitted]

According to our correspondent, in that session the Khuzestan governor-general explained the reconstruction situation there. He said the credit set aside during the current year for reconstruction was $84 billion [as heard]; all of this has been absorbed. Another 10 billion rials from the national credit fund have been allocated to this province. Furthermore, the total bank credit and loans from the Presidency for the reconstrution of this province were 120 billion rials. [passage omitted]

Oil Minister Cited on Results of OPEC Decision

LD1403175591 Tehran IRIB Television Network in Persian 1600 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] In an interview with our correspondent on his return from Geneva today, Oil Minister Aqazadeh outlined the results of his trip. He said that the recent decision by OPEC in Geneva to reduce the production of oil by five percent led to a price increase of $1.5 a barrel. This has reduced the worries of OPEC members to some extent.

The oil minister added: The supervisory committee of the oil market has decided to reduce the current oil production level by 1.2 million barrels a day so that the price of oil will reach the minimum of $21 a barrel that was agreed last summer. Therefore, 22.3 million barrels a day will be produced instead of 23.5 million. He also said Iran wanted production to be reduced by 10 percent rather than five percent, so that the target price of $21 a barrel would be reached quicker.

Mr. Aqazadeh said that OPEC's decision to reduce the production of oil and its decision to strengthen the oil market are signs of the organization's strength. He said: OPEC members are united in basing their next official session, scheduled for two months' time, on the June 1990 Declaration. According to that declaration, which was agreed on by all 13 members before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the production ceiling for the 13 OPEC members was set at $22 million barrels a day in total and the minimum price was set at $21 a barrel.

Velayati Affirms Nation's Right to Reparations

NC1403143591 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 3 Mar 91 p 13

[Report on Foreign Minister Velayati's address to students of Razavi University of Islamic Sciences in Mashhad by unidentified ETTELA'AT correspondent—date not given]

[Excerpts] Speaking about the end of military operations against Iraq and the political outlook for the Persian Gulf region, the foreign minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran said: It is obvious from statements by the United States that it is seeking a long-term foothold in the region. [passage omitted]

Mr. Velayati termed the multinational forces' presence a completely unjustifiable colonialistic act, and said: An intelligent policy on the part of leaders of Islamic countries to establish a political consensus based on equal rights and increased bilateral cooperation, can be very effective. This, in the opinion of the Islamic Republic of Iran is the fundamental solution for stabilizing the Persian Gulf region. [passage omitted]

In conclusion, Mr. Velayati stressed that Iran would defend Iraq's territorial integrity with all its might and would combat all kinds of intervention in its internal affairs.

The foreign minister then answered students' questions, and referred to the results of the Iran-Iraq peace talks. He said: The Islamic Republic of Iran is seeking to obtain reparations in the imposed war and will not relinquish its right to do so in full implementation of Resolution 598.

He added: In the past few months, the peace talks have been eclipsed by the Kuwaiti crisis, on which Iran has expended immense effort and time to prevent the spread of the conflict to the entire region. This has elicited the admiration of politicians around the world. [passage omitted]

Spokesman Affirms 'Right' To Chemical Weapons

LD1403152791 Tehran IRNA in English 1422 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Tehran, Mar. 14, IRNA—A senior Iranian official on Thursday stated that Iran should have the capability for neutralizing the destructive effects of chemical weapons, in view of the access of its neighbours to such lethal arms. "More studies and research is needed on ways of averting the use of chemical weapons and neutralizing their effects," Hoseyn Firuzabadi, chief of the Armed Forces Command Headquarters said.

Firuzabadi was speaking at a seminar to study effects of chemical arms and chemical agents, held in memory of the victims of the Iraqi Government's chemical attacks during the 8-year war especially on the Iraqi town of

Halabjah and the northwestern Iranian town of Sardasht. "Iran's border areas were attacked with toxic arms 400 times by Iraq during its war against the Islamic Republic, and the crime claimed a large number of civlians and combatants as victims," he said. "The chemical arms used by Iraq included hand grenades, mortar and artillery shells, bombs and rockets, filled with mustard, suffocating and sometimes nerve gases," added Firuzabadi. The Iraqi chemical attack on Sardasht, he recalled, wounded 7,000 people, while some two years before that 30,000 Iranian combatants were chemically wounded in the southern fronts during the "Val-Fajr-8" operations on February 10, 1986.

On the chemical arms potential of Iran's neighbours and the superpowers, and the threats they could pose to the country, Firuzabadi pointed out that "the U.S. naval fleets in the Persian Gulf are equipped with chemical arms. "Iraq possesses them (chemical arms). Turkey has access to such arms because of its membership in NATO. The Soviet Union has large stockpiles of chemical agents. Afghanistan because of its dependence on Moscow has got these arms and used them against the mujahideen.."

Elsewhere in his speech, Firuzabadi regretted that none of the countries who are signatories to international conventions banning the use of chemical weapons had condemned Iraq for its chemical attacks on Iran. He insisted on research and said "therefore, we reserve the right for ourselves to get technological knowhow necessary to confront the chemical agents our enemies might use against us."

Zimbabwean Foreign Minister Meets With Karrubi

LD1403123391 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] In his meeting with Majles Speaker Karrubi this morning, the foreign minister of Zimbabwe described relations between Iran and Zimbabwe as constructive. He then supported the aspirations of the people of Palestine to determine their own destiny. He also supported the establishment of the government of Palestine.

According to the Central News Unit, at the meeting the foreign minister of Zimbabwe condemned the presence of foreign forces in the Persian Gulf, believing that their presence causes instability in the region. According to the same report, at that meeting Mr Karrubi said the presence of foreign and multinational forces in the region has created undesirable consequences. He called on all countries, especially members of the Nonaligned Movement, to mount an active confrontation aimed at bringing about the departure of the said forces from the Persian Gulf region. Concluding his remarks, Mr. Karrubi offered his greetings to the speaker of the Zimbabwe parliament and extended an invitation to him to visit our country.

Commentary Examines Reconstruction Economy

NC1003105091 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0450 GMT 9 Mar 91

[Central News Unit's Research Group commentary]

[Text] In the name of God. The year 1369 [year beginning 21 March 1990] coincided with the government's completion of the first year of the decade of reconstruction and construction. The country's economy during the first decade of the Islamic revolution faced various pressures. These pressures stemmed primarily from the extreme fluctuations in oil prices and, as a result, fluctuations between $5.8 billion and $22 billion in oil income; the profound changes in the structure of the management and ownership of units; the imposed war; the economic blockade and the losses this inflicted on economic resources; and the dependent structure of the country.

Under such conditions the growth of the country's gross national product was negative. Inflation soared to 30 percent and higher, and the state budget suffered from a 50 percent deficit. The amount of money in circulation in no way reflected the rate of production in the country. Although the GNP [Gross National Product] continued to register a decrease beginning in 1356 [year beginning 21 March 1977), the amount of money in circulation in the country soared wildly. However, in 1368 [year beginning 21 March 1989], the GNP moved toward a positive course because of the correct policies implemented by the government. For the first time since the revolution, we saw a four percent growth. Thus, 1368 can be considered a turning point on the country's economic graph.

In view of the government's 11 months of economic activities, the growth rate this year will pass this point too. The rate of inflation dropped from 28 percent in 1367 [year beginning 21 March 1988] to 17.4 percent in 1368 and to about 7.5 percent during the first 10 months of the current year [beginning 21 March 1990]. Moreover, the government's budget deficit, which in 1367 had reached the unprecedented figure of 2,400 billion rials—or about 50 percent of the state budget—dropped to $1,200 billion [as heard] in 1368. With the government's financial policies aimed at decreasing dependence on bank resources, by the end of 1369 [year beginning 21 March 1990] this figure is expected to drop to half the figure approved by the Majles, that is, to about 700 billion rials.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani's government correctly identified and understood that the root of most of the country's economic problems, such as inflation, unemployment, and the absence of economic balances in production, lies in production. It thus made increasing production, removing obstacles to production, and expanding and creating operational all production units the focus of its activities, with the objective of achieving maximum production capacity. Maintaining this policy and in the shortest possible time, it was able to remove

many of the obstacles to production. Thus, we are witnessing an unprecedented growth in production, especially in the production by industrial units.

Studies show that during the first half of the current year there was a 10 to 350 percent increase in the production of 66 items. Also, with the implementation of the new foreign currency policies aimed at achieving a logical and realistic rate and at decreasing the number of rates used for foreign exchange from about six rates last year to this year's three rates—the official, competitive, and floating rates—efforts are being made to achieve a system in which only one rate will be used.

Also, with the removal of many of the limitations on the imports of raw materials and especially lifting the limitation on foreign exchange allocations, we have witnessed for the first time in the past 12 years unprecedented growth in production, an increase in supply, and a reduction in the gap between supply and demand in the effort to achieve economic balance and development and, as a result, a drop in the rate of inflation.

Among the government's other economic successes, we can point to the final approval—on the eve of the auspicious Ten Days of Dawn—of the 20,075-billion rial budget for 1370 [year beginning 21 March 1991]. For the first time since the revolution, the country's budget based on forecasts made in the first Five-Year Plan for the country's economic, social, and cultural development was approved on time and sent to the government. Also, the final approval in November this year of the Islamic Republic's first labor law—12 years after the victory of the Islamic revolution—can be described as a basic step in assisting the workers and in granting more impetus to this vast and toiling strata for a more active presence in production, especially when the intention is to fulfill the objectives of the Five-Year Economic Plan.

The structural reform in the government's income system and the increase in the government's income are also among these successes. For the first time this year, the government's income from taxes increased by more than 46 percent.

Also, Iran's active and extensive presence in OPEC's session this year, and—as a result—the increase in and stabilization of oil prices and the strengthening of OPEC's position in the world, are among the government's successes this year.

Special attention has been paid to deprived areas, and the reconstruction of areas destroyed by the imposed war and of quake-stricken areas have been further accelerated. It is expected that by the end of the First Five-Year Plan, the reconstruction and development of deprived areas and of areas damaged by the imposed war will have been completed.

Among the government's other useful and constructive economic programs, we can point to the steps taken to prepare for the people's true and increased participation in economic plans and activities by offering many of the shares of many factories and production units to the stock market. The people welcomed this wholeheartedly; this in itself was proof of the economic stability and the fact that the economy is moving toward a balance and increased production.

With a brief glance at the bright economic record of the government during the current year, we hope we will see more and more government successes in production and construction and in its efforts to achieve economic balance and to create social justice within the context of the Five-Year Economic Development Plan.

Education, Anti-Drug Efforts Viewed

NC1103123191 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0448 GMT 11 Mar 91

[Central News Unit Research Group commentary]

[Text] In continuing our discussion of all the political, econonomic, cultural, and social activities and their outcomes in our country in 1369 [year ending 20 March 1991] which is coming to a close, we will discuss the most important social and cultural developments in the country during 1369 in such fields as the fight against narcotics, the educational-cultural activities of the ministries of education and of culture and higher education, and the literacy movement.

During 1369 the Islamic Revolution Committee [IRC] acted on the basis of formerly compiled programs and it decisively continuned the fight against narcotics and scored more successes in this year as far as the destruction drug traffickers and their smuggling networks and the arrests of addicts are concerned. The IRC stated that over the past year, it was able to control and reduce drug imports, and that it carried out nationwide operations within the framework of the Val-'Adiyat plan. The Zafar-2, -3, and -4 operations were a series of urban and rural activities of the IRC in the current year. During these operations, the IRC was able to arrest about 26,000 drug smugglers and addicts. Of this number, two-thirds were addicts. This figure is separate from the number of smugglers and addicts who were arrested in desert or border operations, and from the number of smugglers and addicts who were arrested each month.

For example, in only the first six months of 1369, some 12 tonnes of drugs were seized and 8,000 smugglers arrested. IRC officials stated that with the intensified, harsher measures taken by the general headquarters for the fight against drugs, the current year witnessed a drop in the number of smugglers; a curb on addicts; and further limitation of the activities of urban bands. The IRC's latest major haul was the 2,400-kg morphine consignment which was recently confiscated.

The Ministry of Culture and Higher Education began 1369 with new activities, and it is continuing not only many of its annual programs, but programs envisaged in the country's first Five-Year Plan. The Ministry of Culture and Higher Education has faced many problems,

including qualitative and quantitive problems in the education and student levels, problems in the fields of student welfare and livelihood, and a shortage of teachers, which continues to be a problem. However, many fresh steps have been taken to overcome some of the problems.

In 1369, the amount of 13 billion rials had been envisaged for the purchase and construction of student dormitories, and 2 billion rials from the country's defense budget were allocated to the strengthening of the country's scientific structure and to overcoming welfare problems faced by combatant students. The registration of 34,000 students in the Payam-e Nur [correspondence] College, the introduction of night classes in the country's universities, and the permission granted to the public and private sectors to set up higher education centers were among the programs of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education. In the quantitative expansion of universities, priorities are to be granted to the country's deprived areas.

The minister of culture and higher education has stated that during the past year, in addition to the formation and expansion of Master of Science and Doctorate courses, and a 40 percent increase in the number of students that can take these courses, shortly 3,000 Master of Science graduates are to be absorbed by higher education centers. Also during the current year, permission for the employment of 1,123 new members in the scientific field is under study.

In 1369, more than 45 billion rials have been envisaged for development projects. Of this amount, 12 percent will be equally allocated to plans of human sciences and agriculture, 10 percent to technical-engineering projects, 8 percent to basic sciences, 42 percent to education grants, and 8 percent to university research. Some 50,000 square meters were added to the universities and colleges throughout the country. The construction of a student dormitory with a 11,530-student capacity was completed, and 2 billion tumans of bank loans were spent to purchase a dormitory with a 4,500-student capacity.

It should be added that the minister of culture and higher education recently announced that despite development and services activities, the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education faces a 20 billion-rial shortage in development allocations. Meanwhile, it is being said that in the coming year [year beginning 21 March 1991] higher education centers will face a 80-billion rial shortage in credits.

The Ministry of Education is ending 1369 after having faced many vicissitudes, and despite its efforts to solve the problem of shortages of schools, teachers, and teaching facilities, it advanced at a slow pace because of the problems it faced.

As far as solving the problem of teacher shortages during the current year is concerned, 700 graduate teachers were employed by the ministry, and the employment of 6,000 people with graduate and post-graduate degrees in technical, vocational, and theoretical fields is being studied on the basis of the needs of education centers.

During the current year, 23 percent of elementary school students were able to continue their education on higher levels, and the shortage of classes and schools and the existence of schools that run three or four sessions a day continue to be among the Education Ministry's most important problems.

In order to overcome the shortage of schools and other problems in 1369, some 1,000 classes were formed in non-profit making schools, and 12,000 classes were also constructed. But in view of the shortage of 110,000 classes, these figures are extremely minimal.

It should be said that the Education Ministry's budget proposal for 1369 was 107 billion tumans, of which 93 billion tumans was allocated by the Majles. In view of all these shortages, one can predict what the outcome will be by the end of the year.

Meanwhile, the law on employing persons committed to serve education was not approved by the Majles during the current year. This plan called for a 32 billion-rial budget. Thus, the education minister warned of classes without teachers in the coming year. Despite many efforts, the problem of a shortage in textbooks continued, and students received some of the textbooks with a delay.

In addition to these problems, the Ministry of Education faced a 14 billion [currency not specified] budget deficit. In view of all this, it has been said that the Ministry's budget is to increase by 20 percent, and that the budget per head for the students will also be increased. It is hoped that during the new year, the officials and Majles deputies will further strengthen the field of education and begin fresh and rapid action.

As for the fight against illiteracy, fresh activities were started in the country by officials. In early 1369, the government's new plan for a comprehensive fight against illteracy was compiled. This new plan for the anti-illiteracy mobilization was implemented in various stages, and the first stage which started in Khordad [May-June] offered classes for the urban population between 10 and 35 years. The plan's second and third stages were voluntary. But compulsory stages or limitations for that group of illiterate people who did not attend classes have also been envisaged. The first phase which was implemented in the three summer months was offered to 800,000 illiterates. The percentage of women in this figure was extremely high. In the second phase which granted priority to villages, 80,000 assistant instructors taught in 84,000 classes.

On the whole in 1369, some 3,117,000 people attended literacy classes. This was a new phenomenon in comparison with the previous years. Some 70 percent of the students who attended these courses were women, and 68 percent of the activities were centered in the villages.

The record of the anti-illiteracy movement within the framework of the government's new plan was relatively successful during 1369, and it is hoped that this plan will continue and expand with full strength.

Baker Plan Paves Way for Arab-Israeli Talks

LD1403212991 Tehran in English to Europe 1930 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] It can be said that the American Secretary of State James Baker's chain visits to the region is taking place with the objective of benefiting from the U.S.-led multinational force attack against Iraq. One of the objectives is to resume political and diplomatic activities to resolve the issue of Palestine and the occupied territories in accordance with the wishes of the Zionist regime and on the basis of the Baker peace plan offered in late 1989.

The five-point Baker peace plan does not differ in principle with the plan offered by Yitzhaq Shamir in 1989. Before Mr. Baker embarks upon his visit to the regional countries, high-ranking American officials, including U.S. President George Bush, had made statements to the effect that peace in the Middle East and a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict would be achieved on the basis of the principle of exchanging land for peace. But Israel has always rejected the notion of exchanging land for peace and a total withdrawal from the occupied territories.

The visit to the regional countries by Mr. Baker is taking place at a time when there has been a great deal of debate and discussion within the U.S. Administration about granting aid to Israel under different pretexts. These aid packages are being given to the Zionist regime to absorb the Soviet Jewish emigrants in occupied Palestine and as a reward to Israel for not retaliating against Iraqi attacks.

Mr. Baker says he wants to seek the views of the parties involved in the Middle East crisis during his visit. Notwithstanding the Israeli reaction and response to the American plan for resolving the Palestine issue, Egypt and some other Arab countries, as well as the PLO have expressed their pleasure over Mr. Bush's recent statement on resolving the Palestinian isue and exchanging land for peace. Meanwhile, top-ranking PLO officials in Tunis discuss the U.S. plan for Middle East peace: an agreement to the meeting of a group of Palestinian personalities on the occupied land with the secretary of state.

In general, Baker's peace plan has left the way open for meeting and talks between Israeli and Arab figures.

Commentary Views Gulf War's Impact on Europe

NC1403150091 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 0450 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Central News Unit's Research Group commentary]

[Text] Before the onset of the recent crisis in the region, the issue of a united Europe, and its place in world policy and international responsibilities, formed the topic of important political discussions in the world mass media. At that stage, the major part of the EC's efforts sought to speed up the process of political-economic unity, to create a common military structure that could act as the community's military arm in the world, and to determine NATO's future.

When the crisis began, these activities were largely overshadowed by Middle East problems. Each one of the main EC members tried—one way or another—to exploit this crisis to further strengthen its position inside the community.

France, as a spokesman for a united Europe and independent from America, made the greatest efforts to prevent a war and to find a peaceful solution. However, Iraq's obstinacy defeated all these efforts. Actually, this defeat was manifest with former French Defense Minister Chevenement, as he was among the major supporters of the idea of maintaining the Iraqi regime in power.

Even though France changed its previous positions, and by joining the American camp tried to amend them, nevertheless, experts on European affairs believe that the war has to a certain extent brought France face to face with problems on the world scene and within the EC.

Meanwhile, Britain—which at that time was facing a type of isolationism because of its opposition to a financial and monetary union—joined America in a stern approach to the occupation of Kuwait. To a large extent, this gave its position relative strength. And, this too created yet another problem for France in particular and for the other supporters of a rapid union—namely, Germany and Italy in general.

Even though it seems that Germany, like the other European countries, pursued America's position in this crisis, nevertheless it should be said that it refrained from sending troops to the region by implementing a calculated policy and by resorting to its constitution until the end. By doing so it enraged Congress and the State Department. With White House intervention, this row which had gone as far as the use of force, died down to a certain extent. This is at a time when at the end of the Persian Gulf crisis, the officials of that country intend to re-arm Germany within the framework of a united Europe.

This in itself can be an warning bell for Britain because political analysts believe that if this country intends, by pursuing American policies, to force France to join Germany and confront British policies, ultimately the main loser will be Britain itself, unless this country—as apparently stated by Major during his recent visit to Germany—rectifies its stances and considers itself a major partner in European problems. Moreover, the emergence of any type of difference within the EC will strengthen the Soviet Union's role in Europe; this does not seem to be something that any of the major EC members wants at this point.

At any rate, one can say that the establishment of security in the Middle East—irrespective of whether it is established by any one of the European or American world powers—will play a significant role in the weakening or strengthening of these governments. Even though the Middle East is thousands of kilometers away from Europe and America, because of the great dependence of the industrial countries on oil, it has turned into the major scene of worldwide rivalries among these powers.

There are two possibilities as far as American-European relations are concerned. The first possibility is that America will emerge as the sole world superpower and that the European countries will act as followers for the foreseeable future because of the weaknesses that they have shown in confronting regional crises. The other possibility that European experts consider to be a stronger one is that with the settling of the dust of the crisis, Europe will once again make more efforts to strengthen unity and remove the weak points in a united Europe, and will, in the near future, emerge as America's powerful rival. Thus, it seems that in order to strengthen their position in the Middle East, the EC countries should invest on other countries that have the capability to create a balance.

Resumption of Diplomatic Ties With Egypt Derided

NC1503042691 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 28 Feb 91 p 3

[Unattributed commentary: "Egypt's Futile Effort"]

[Excerpts] The Egyptian regime has recently shown itself to be very desirous of establishing relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran and would like to resume diplomatic ties with Iran if possible. [passage omitted]

Imam Khomeyni decreed that relations with Egypt be severed after it signed the shameful Camp David accords. As Egypt still abides by this accord, this decision cannot be reversed.

Breaking ties with Egypt falls into the same category as breaking ties with the regimes in Israel and South Africa. Unless the reasons for these measures are removed, Iran will not reverse its decision and ties cannot be resumed.

Despite the awakening in the Islamic world and although the intifadah has been going on for three years, the Egyptian regime has taken no positive steps to defend Muslims; on the contrary, it has been an obstacle to Islamic uprisings.

Under such conditions, any efforts to forge ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran are futile. The reopening of offices to protect the interests of the two countries, which have been closed since 1366 [year beginning 21 March 1987], is a separate issue and cannot be considered as a resumption of diplomatic relations.

The Egyptian regime would be well advised to give some thought to the Islamic renaissance and the Muslim awakening. The powers of world arrogance may continue to bare their fangs at Muslims, but the trend of events favors the Islamic world, and Muslims will never forget their cries for liberation.

These cries will continue to resound until the powers of world arrogance are destroyed. The regime in a country like Egypt, which has a revolutionary people, would do well to consider the greatness of the Islamic world instead of remaining servile to the United States and Israel. The era of popular indifference to government servility is over. Politicians would be well advised to open the windows to the world of Islam, even for a moment, and inhale the fragrance of freedom.

Saudi Initiative Necessary To Improve Ties

NC1503043691 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 3 Mar 91 p 14

[Unattributed commentary: "Is Riyadh Trying To Make Amends for the Past?"]

[Excerpts] At a time when many countries are adopting measures to improve ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran, Saudi Arabia also took a step forward and expressed its desire to establish cordial ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran. [passage omitted]

At a meeting with the Kuwaiti crown prince last Wednesday, King Fahd blamed Saddam for the strained relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran. He expressed the hope that cordial ties will be forged between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

These remarks are worth noting for two reasons. If we take King Fahd at his word, then this would indicate that Saudi Arabia was a tool in Saddam's hands for many years and allowed itself to be guided by Baghdad's views on Islamic Iran. This is not very plausible, however, in view of the hold the White House has over Riyadh and the fact that the Baghdad regime had no connection with the massacre of Iranian pilgrims—the main reason for the deterioration of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran.

It is indisputable that the massacre of the pilgrims, in an effort to prevent the marches for the disavowal of the pagans and the restrictions on the number of pilgrims, were dictated to the Riyadh court by the White House. Therefore, the real culprit for the strained relations between the two countries is the White House, not Baghdad. [passage omitted]

Thus, if Riyadh wishes to act sensibly, it must find a way to compensate for all the damages it inflicted and make the first move. In tandem with these measures, it should take the necessary steps to open the way for Iranian pilgrims to perform the pilgrimage of Abraham and not try to block the path to God.

If the Saudi regime truly repents its past actions and desires cordial ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran, it must eliminate all the conditions for the pilgrimage dictated to it by the United States, open the path to as many pilgrims as the Islamic Republic of Iran wishes to send, and permit them to stage marches for the disavowal of the pagans freely.

U.S. Seeks To Impose 'Satellite Regime' in Iraq

NC1503002991 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 5 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "A Satellite Government Planned for Iraq"]

[Text] Washington's next move in the region will be to impose a satellite regime on Iraq. The United States is using political, military and economic levers to materialize this.

Politically, the Security Council is serving the expansionist aims of the U.S. In its latest resolutions the Security Council has imposed economic sanctions against Iraq. This is a clear indication that pressures against Iraq will continue until the present regime in Iraq has changed. This comes under conditions that the Security Council's main duty is preservation of peace and security in the world instead of embarking on measures aimed at changing governments.

Under circumstances that Iraq has fully withdrawn from Kuwait and according to America its army has been shattered and part of Iraqi territory is under U.S. occupation, what other aims could these stepped-up U.N. sanctions against Iraq pursue?

Neither the U.S. nor the permanent members of the Security Council have the right to impose a government on the Iraqi nation. It is only the people of Iraq themselves who should decide their own fate. The people of the region will never forget the injustice done by the Security Council as regards the regional developments. They will not forget how the United Nations endorsed the Zionists' aggression against the Islamic land of Palestine and did not take any practical action in checking the repeated expansionist moves of the Zionists.

Even the Gaza Strip and the West Bank of the Jordan River, which according to the UN Resolution 242, should have been returned to the Palestinians, are still under the occupation of the Zionists. The Security Council has not bothered even to restore part of the Palestinian territory to its main owners.

Militarily, the U.S. will continue its occupation of the Iraqi territory so that by gradually expanding this aggression it would bring to power a provisional government. Some nationalistic elements have reportedly assembled in Saudi Arabia ready to form such a government. It seems that one objective behind direct negotiations between high-ranking U.S. officials with Iraqi army commanders is to divide them from Saddam Husayn and provoke them for an uprising against the Baghdad regime.

In view of the fact that the U.S. has no backing among the Iraqi people, it is only vesting hope in some elements at the Iraqi army in order to create a new despotic state with the assistance of dependent politicians.

Economically, the U.S. and its allies have turned Iraq into ruins so that its oil incomes for long years should be spent on its rehabilitation. Furthermore, Iraq has undertaken to pay for the costs of the Persian Gulf war. Obviously, the Baghdad regime is unable to bear these huge expenses and if it fails to pay reparations to Kuwait, pressures will continue until the ruling regime is toppled and replaced with another.

On the other hand, Iraq will have to considerably raise its oil exports in order to meet the expenses of the war-torn country's reconstruction. This in turn will be effective in bringing the oil prices down.

At any rate the U.S. and allies are responsible for destroying Iraq's economic infrastructure to the same extent that the Iraqi regime is to blame for demolishing Kuwait's oil installations.

Editorial on Potential 'Sabra, Shatila' in Kuwait

NC1403203591 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 9 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "God Help the Palestinians"]

[Excerpt] It has been reported that 6,000 Palestinians have been detained in Kuwait City since its liberation and subsequent separation from Iraq eight days ago. At least 30 Palestinians are said to have been executed, and 170,000 remain in Kuwait from a pre-invasion total of 400,000.

Given the frenzy, destruction and chaos that have characterized postwar Kuwait, as well as what must be the tremendous frustration of a population whose idyllic life was a source of contemporary dreams and who are now reduced to watching the black smoke billowing from their oilfields mingled with their trashed surroundings and aspirations, will it come as a surprise if another Sabra and Shatila is visited upon the Palestinians?

Across the border in Riyadh, four Palestinians have already had their heads literally lopped off without benefit of trial.

Meanwhile, Amnesty International has said that Egyptians and Sudanese have also been rounded up in large numbers in Kuwait. If the world is not vigilant on this question, the beleaguered Palestinians in Kuwait seem set to undergo atrocities that will be an irredeemable crime and a blot on the conscience of the Muslim world, and certainly the United Nations. [passage omitted]

Editorial Berates Israeli 'Blackmail' of U.S.

NC1503004191 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 10 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Israeli Bill"]

[Excerpts] Much has been said about Israel's exercise of restraint and policy of non-retaliation during the 43-day war in the Persian Gulf. Viewed as his trump card, Saddam Husayn struck at Israel with as many as 39 Scud missiles in his effort to transform the conflict into an Arab-Israeli war. And while the Zionist-controlled world media voiced in unison that the "Americans were asking much of Israel", the Zionist government played the situation for all it could get. [passage omitted]

Already the largest recipient of U.S. monetary support, receiving an allotment of $3 billion in military and economic assistance yearly, Israel has floated various requests for help from its ally and mentor including $10 billion in housing loan guarantees and $2 billion for the economic costs of the war. Rumors are also rife that the latest consignment represents only a portion of the agreed U.S. "compensation fee." Unconfirmed reports claim that Shamir has received a Bush guarantee of massive "grants, loans and debt forgiveness."

As though this staggering manifestation of American sympathy was not enough, U.S. President Bush has dispatched Secretary of State James A. Baker III to Tel Aviv to express Washington's appreciation. Baker's visit also gave rise to speculation that Bush has sent his top diplomat to personally pacify Shamir's fears of an increased international call for a Middle East peace conference. Israel has long opposed a peace meeting on a global scale which could lead to giving up of the occupied land which the Zionists view as theirs. [passage omitted]

That the missiles did not devastate civilian quarters makes the Israeli blackmail of the United States look more ludicrous. Despite the hullaballoo, the physical harm inflicted by the Iraqi missiles was negligible. Although the damage to property was extensive only three elder civilians died (because of coronary failure) while tens of people were slightly injured. The widely feared chemical attack did not materialize and the Scuds proved to be highly inaccurate.

By doing nothing to punish the Iraqis, Israel was able to replenish its almost empty coffers; Tel Aviv's "self-denial" cost Washington $2 billion in aid. Considering that the United States is itself facing budgetary pressures in paying for the war, it is plain to see that the U.S. Treasury was after all the biggest loser in the Persian Gulf war.

Gulf Security System To Exclude Foreign Forces

NC1503001291 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 5 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Imposed Security Plan Is Doomed To Fail"]

[Text] As President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani has recently stated, any imposed plan for the security of the Persian Gulf region is doomed to failure and would only serve as a source for deep-rooted unrest. He emphatically stressed the fact that the only plan which could maintain tranquillity in this part of the world, would be a security arrangement based on the participation of regional states that is free from foreign intervention.

Obviously, with regard to past experiences, particularly the recent Persian Gulf crisis, the need for the establishment of a security system in the region is felt more than ever before and there is an identity of views among most of the regional states in this connection. The creation of such a system, especially after the withdrawal of the U.S.-led forces from the region which could be interpreted as de facto end to the Persian Gulf crisis, would be inevitable.

In the same manner however it is felt that a new security system based on the new international situation and relations which came out of the framework of the NATO and Warsaw pacts is inevitable, despite resistance by some military powers.

Basically, a security system or a political, military and economic institution could be formed seriously, practically and permanently only when special political, economic and military requirements are met necessitating its formation. Otherwise, the said institution could not perform its functions and no doubt would be shattered in a short period of time.

Obviously, taking into consideration public opinion in the Persian Gulf region and economic, military and manpower potentials in this part of the world which are sufficient for the creation of an independent regional security system, any foreign intervention would face a negative response from certain regional states and would thus weaken the reliability of such a system. In other words, any security system calling for foreign intervention and presence in the Persian Gulf region would ultimately entail tension and other crises in various dimensions which would contradict the very idea behind the formation of a security system which is to maintain peace and security.

Therefore, it should be concluded without any trace of doubt that the evacuation of foreign forces from the region and, in the light of appropriate grounds for cooperation among regional states, the need for the formation of a regional security system is inevitably felt.

Meanwhile, regional countries should seek the cooperation of other countries in the world, as well as international bodies, for the withdrawal of foreign force from the region and should pave the way for the establishment of a lasting peace in this important part of the world.

Editorial Rejects Disintegration of Iraq

NC1503002591 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 6 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Iraqi Disintegration Not Acceptable"]

[Text] An internal uprising is spreading in Iraq. The movement which started in southern cities has now reached central Iraq, with the holy cities of al-Najaf and Karbala' reportedly under insurgent control. Although reliable sources have not independently confirmed the reports and provided accurate information on the clashes between government forces and the Iraqi people, it is certain that Iraq will witness new developments in the coming days.

Of course, reports of unrest and clashes between forces loyal to the government and the Iraqi people are not welcome, especially amidst words of division in the Iraqi army. Moreover, these reports of disturbances and unrest in the Iraqi cities may suggest an imminent civil war which can only be a disaster for the Iraqi people which have already seen devastation by two wars.

The sufferings and losses sustained by the Iraqi people over the past decade may be attributed to their inadequate leaders who, instead of spending huge oil revenues on the legitimate needs of the people, spent them to achieve far-reaching military desires. Instead of concentrating revenues on building a solid infrastructure, these leaders spent the nation's revenues on buying instruments of war, bloodshed and destruction.

Now that Saddam Husayn has fully accepted and complied with the U.S.-led allied conditions, he must be held accountable for all the destruction inflicted on the country and its people. This responsibility demands nothing less than that he resign for the good of the people and to prevent further bloodshed.

Meanwhile, it is our hope that the Iraqi people would do nothing which may give an excuse to their enemies for further plots against them. By now they should learn a lesson and keep their eyes open while struggling for their genuine rights.

Iraqi Kurds in the north can also help to achieve this end. Of course extremist Kurdish factions who are calling for an independent state can have no voice in any negotiations here because the disintegration of Iraq cannot be accepted under any circumstances, nor will its three neighbors, namely, Iran, Turkey, and Syria allow formation of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi army should not point its gun to the people but welcome the people's will and declare neutrality and accept what the people of Iraq decide in free democratic elections.

Editorial Rejects Damascus Meeting's Formula

NC1503002791 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 7 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Damascus Meeting Cannot Be Taken Seriously"]

[Text] Foreign Ministers of Syria, Egypt and (P)GCC [(Persian) Gulf Cooperation Council] members have reached an apparent formula for future political, economic and security cooperation in the region. This was announced by Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' in Damascus, in a press conference at the end of the meeting of the "Cairo Eight" (as described by the West) and whose members aligned with the anti-Iraq coalition during the Persian Gulf war.

Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid also proposed the formation of an Arab peace-keeping force with Egypt and Syria maintaining the core roles.

The plan, now being widely propagated by the Western mass media, should not be taken seriously.

The alliance in effect has two wings. One is the wealthy (P)GCC countries with huge oil resources, who proved a shortfall in military might on the August 2 invasion of Kuwait and second is Egypt and Syria who are in dire need of Arab littoral states' petro-dollars.

The two states, for special reasons, supported the (P)GCC but played no effective role in driving Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. Their troop deployment in Saudi Arabia was a symbolic move to show that it is not only the West opposing Iraq's aggression but Arabs as well.

The Damascus meeting could be tolerated if it was limited to Egypt and Syria receiving financial assistance from the (P)GCC countries but if a "security arrangement" is to be taken seriously, it has to be stated explicitly that any arrangement without considering Iran as the strongest country in the Persian Gulf region is certainly doomed to fail.

How Syria, which is unable militarily to retake the Golan Heights from a 3 million occupying Israeli regime, is able to meet the security of all the Persian Gulf region with its political and military turmoil is beyond comprehension.

Moreover, if these countries located outside the region, such as Egypt, are accepted in a Persian Gulf security system, how one can prevent other countries, near to the region such as India and the Soviet Union not joining in? [sentence as published]

It seems that the Damascus meeting, like any other collective Arab summits, will be short lived. One remebers that two years ago, Iraq and Egypt formed the core of the Arab Cooperation Council.

West's Response to Iraqi 'Uprising' Criticized

NC1503003991 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 10 Mar 91 p 2

[Editorial: "Crime To Stay Silent Before Mustard Gas Use in Iraq"]

[Text] Events are moving at a pretty hectic pace across the borders in Iraq, protests and uprisings among the Iraqi people are gaining new dimensions as each day passes and the southern as well as the northern cities of this country are in the throes of a struggle to overthrow

the Ba'thist regime—the very latest reports indicate that the uprising is spreading to the very heart of the capital, Baghdad and can take hold there soon if it proceeds at the same intense pace.

A very definite and expectable [as published] reaction of the Iraqi regime to the tumultuous happenings is the very determined effort being made to suppress these uprisings using every means available. It has been very widely reported that the elite Republican Guards are being used to spearhead this move to curb and crush at all costs the disturbances which can be unsettling to the regime.

There are indeed reports of several army factions turning around to join the people in their uprising, but yet the majority of the Iraqi people are direly short of weapons and need to be helped.

One thing that cannot pass observation in all that is happening at present is the fact that the Western countries and their mass media reacting to this massive popular uprising have shown but muted, nay even muffled, response to them. There are reports no doubt, but they are only barely factual and lacking in the kind of enthusiasm which these same media showed at the time the Iraqi regime's war machine was in the process of being crushed by the U.S. just a month ago.

Western propaganda were quick to encourage the Iraqi people to topple the Iraqi regime during the war that has just ended, but now with the picture changing and the uprisings taking a popular turn, there is no more cheering from the Western quarter. Why, we wonder? Our guess is that the West believes that an isolated and defeated Saddam would be better in place than a populist regime.

Not only has the West refused to blazon the successes of the popular uprising that is now in progress, it does not even object to the Iraqi civilian population being suppressed by the heavily armed Iraqi military forces. Instead the West is portraying the uprising by Iraqi people from different walks of life as one that has been engineered by the Shiites in order to threaten its neighbors. Moreover, they are even insinuating that the Shiites may be trying to break Iraq up and suggest that the region will as a result become insecure and unsafe if a popular government should come to power.

This is the time for the United Nations to play its part once again, this time on behalf of the people of Iraq, and fulfill its responsibilities by coming out against the suppression of a people demanding true justice and preventing the outbreak of an all-out civil war in Iraq. The United Nations and its secretary general must take responsibility before the massacres which are taking place in several Iraqi cities. To stay silent before such happenings, when there is even the very real threat of the use of chemical weapons again against a civilian population, will be crime unforgivable.

The Ba'thists have already used mustard gas against the revolutionary people of Iraq.

Report Claims MKO Killed 100 Guards Corps

TA1403141291 (Clandestine) Iran's Flag of Freedom Radio in Persian 0330 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] The Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization [MKO], based in Baghdad, has announced that yesterday the Islamic Republic's Guards infiltrated Iraqi territory and killed an MKO member named Reza Karam-'Ali and wounded several others. The MKO claimed they killed 100 Guards in a counterattack against a Guards Corps center in western Iran.

Nepal & Bhutan

Bhutan

Broadcasting Complex Inaugurated in Thimbu

BK1503105791 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] In Bhutan, a full-fledged broadcasting complex built entirely with India's assistance was inaugurated today in the capital, Thimbu. The 8-crore-rupee project includes a high-power 50-kilowatt shortwave transmitter which covers the whole of Bhutan and the neighboring areas. It is fully designed and equipped by All India Radio. The station complex situated in the Paro Valley has specially designed studios to accommodate large groups of Bhutanese artistes with their traditional huge wind instruments. Handing over the key of the complex to Bhutan's communication minister, Mr. (Dabgyel), the Indian ambassador at Thimbu, Mr. B.C. Khanna, said the project is yet another manifestation of India's long commitment to the social and economic development of Bhutan. Mr. (Dabgyel) said the event is a milestone in the broadcasting history of his country.

Speaking on the occasion, the director general of All India Radio, Mr. A.R. Shinde, said despite difficult climatic conditions, the All India Radio engineers executed the project in four years. Our correspondent, Sebastian Robert, adds from Thimbu that the inaugural ceremony was broadcast live and the Bhutanese people tuned their transistors to the broadcast enthusiastically, being informed about the event three to four days ago.

Pakistan

Kuwait Ready To Hire Workers in Government Jobs

BK1403144191 Islamabad Domestic Service in Urdu 1400 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Kuwait has expressed its readiness to consider absorbing some 12,000 Pakistanis serving in government jobs before it was invaded by Iraq. This was stated by Ejazul Haq, federal minister for labor and overseas

Pakistanis, on his return to Islamabad today after visiting Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Regarding those who had been working with private firms, he said the picture is not yet clear as private firms lost all their assets during the Iraqi occupation. Kuwaiti authorities, however, have a sympathetic attitude towards Pakistani workers and want to give them maximum help.

Foreign Secretary on Upcoming Talks With India

BK1503091891 Delhi Domestic Service in English 0830 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] The Pakistan foreign secretary, Mr. Shaharyar Khan, has expressed hope that the fourth round of secretary-level talks due to begin on the 4th of next month in New Delhi will keep the momentum generated during the last round of talks in Islamabad last December.

Speaking at the Pakistan Institute of International Affairs in Karachi, Mr. Khan said the tone of exchanges between India and Pakistan has improved following the meeting between the two prime ministers in Maldives last November during the SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summit.

Indian, Pakistani Nuclear Capabilities Compared

BK1203113391 Islamabad THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 12 Mar 91 pp 4, 6

[Article by Munir Ahmad Suleri: "Pakistan's Nuclear Policy and India"]

[Text] About nuclear instability in South Asia, Leonard S. Spector of Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a Washington-based US "think tank" organisation, points out that India, which greatly expanded its nuclear weapons capabilities during the 1980s (also clandestinely obtained foreign assistance) could probably field 40 to 60 atomic bombs. There is similar imbalance in the air forces of the two countries. As a result of these asymmetries, Pakistan would have to fear an Indian preemptive attack against its nuclear forces in the event of war.

Equally noteworthy is the stand taken by General K. Sundarji [former Indian Army chief] that a nuclear catastrophe can be avoided by both sides sending each other clear and unambiguous deterrent signals. Arguing that this cannot be achieved by the "prolonged practice of uncertainty," he favours an overt declaratory status even though he says that both sides already treat each other as de facto nuclear powers. Apart from such mutual perceptions, there are several widely publicised international assessment of the number of bombs already in the sub-continent's basements predicted upon estimates of the quantity of unsafeguarded weapons grade nuclear materials available to either side.

According to nuclear ambitions, the latest in the Carnegie Endowments' annual reports on near-nuclear countries, India could in the event of significant hostilities, deploy 40 to 60 weapons using any of the 200 or so advanced aircraft in its inventory as against Pakistan's five to 10 for delivery by 40-50 comparable aircraft i.e. F-16. With neither side taking anything for granted, is there anything more that needs to be done to dispel mis-conceptions? Before addressing this question, it is necessary to examine whether the US hesitation in giving Pakistan a clean chit this year signals a change that warrants a shift in Indian policies in terms of information in the public domain.

As per intelligence report (which is, in fact, a malicious propaganda against Pakistan's peaceful nuclear programme and acquisition of peaceful nuclear technology for its socio-economic development and to overcome her serious energy crisis) in June last Pakistan had completed the modification of several F-16s for carrying nuclear bombs.

In September, 1990, a West German court heard an admission from a businessman accused of illicit trading in prohibited nuclear materials that he had delivered tritium gas to Pakistan. This only confirmed the suspicion that had been aired before that Islamabad was trying to purify tritium smuggled in for the purpose. A few grams of tritium added to a nuclear charge significantly increase the lethal yield permitting a reduction in size and weight of the weapon.

India too has been accused of developing tritium in testimony presented by the director of CIA to a congressional committee in May, 1989. Taken singly or together, recent developments do not alter the nature of the challenge posed by Pakistan's nuclear potential about which US has had conclusive evidence at least since the autumn of 1986 when US intelligence agencies gave the President their joint assessment that Paksitan had achieved a weapons capability. The reluctance to certify after four years of turning a blind eye is apparently due to Pakistan's loss of strategic relevance in the post-cold war rather than only intrinsic change in its nuclear status.

It is worthwhile to note that there are no reports so far from either Indian or other intelligence sources that Pakistan has taken any steps to integrate a nuclear strike in its war-fighting doctrines. India has done nothing of the kind either. Pakistan and India have been accusing each other of adopting a policy of ambiguity. This suggests that nuclear weapons are being treated by both as a fail-safe or a last resort option on the pattern of what Israel readied itself for the Ramadan war of 1973. To my mind, neither India nor Pakistan will use mass destruction weapons to break the will of the adversary as the US did in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

According to India "think tank", the right course for India is to proceed on the basis that both India and Pakistan are de facto nuclear power. Ways have to be

paved to maintain the balance that has been achieved by the ability each country has to respond to a first strike by inflicting unacceptable retaliatory damage on the other.

This opens the way for evolving confidence building measures like the recent ratification of the Indo-Pak accord on not attacking each other nuclear facilities which is small but a significant step in the right direction. However, the nuclear proliferation has become a reality. It can neither disappear nor can this process be reversed through a negative and coercive approach. Multi-national consensus at the global or regional level is vital to save mankind from the horrors of a nuclear catastrophe. If that is achieved, ways should be found to live with the threat. Since the US, the Soviet Union and China have given each other assurance that nuclear bombs will not be used but will be held in reserve to deter the other from using them. There is no case for arguing a similar move in the sub-continent that would have a discriminatory connotation.

If the "nuclear balance of terror" can blossom into a stable European peace, a stable super power equation, there is no reason on the face of earth why the same principle, other things being equal, is not applicable to South Asia and anywhere else. Anyway, the other day Mr. Munir Ahmad Khan, Chairman, PAEC [Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission], rightly cautioned that while dealing with the nuclear issue utmost restraint and care should be exercised so as not to give ammunition to our critics abroad to attack and undermine our nuclear programme. Pakistan has suffered a great deal due to discriminatory regulations and embargoes. The US policy towards Pakistan's nuclear programme has been marked by double standard.

'Golden Age' of Relations With U.S. 'Finished'

BK1303103291 Hong Kong AFP in English 0947 GMT 13 Mar 91

[By Rene Slama]

[Text] Islamabad, March 13 (AFP)—Washington is worried that Pakistan's Army Chief of Staff Aslam Beg, who displayed a pro-Islamic bent during the Gulf war, may have political ambitions, Western sources and newspapers here say. Not only was the general critical of the U.S.-led onslaught against Iraq at a time when 10,000 Pakistani troops were lined up with the U.S.-led coalition, he has also emerged as a key figure in Pakistan's nuclear dispute with Washington.

The United States, which has been at odds for the past six months with Islamabad over suspicions it has the capacity to develop nuclear weapons, seems to view General Beg as an obstacle to a settlement of the nuclear controversy and fears he may be seeking political power, a top Western diplomat said.

"Last month's tensions between the civilian government and the military over the Gulf war have not ended," the latest issue of the monthly magazine Herald warned, adding that upcoming weeks would see whether the "government can see through its term in office or whether there is a military takeover."

Washington associates the general with the country's military-Islamic lobby, which is active within the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency and includes the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami Party, the Western diplomat indicated. The lobby, deeply anti-Indian, found vent for its views in an editorial published Tuesday in THE MUSLIM daily.

Commentator Shireen Mazari charged that U.S. diplomats were "carefully orchestrating a campaign to draw negative similarities" between Iraqi President Saddam Husayn" and Gen. Beg, who she said embodied Pakistan's nuclear "streak of defiance."

According to Washington, Pakistan last year made great strides in enriching uranium and developing nuclear devices, thus contravening a U.S. law that regulates bilateral relations in the field. According to one Western diplomat, Pakistan is "in a position to possess all the elements" of a bomb.

Washington suspended some 600 million dollars in annual aid to Pakistan October 1 after President George Bush failed to certify to Congress that Islamabad's nuclear program was solely for peaceful purposes. The move came at the height of the Gulf crisis and further stirred anti-U.S. sentiment in this Moslem nation that spilled into the streets as thousands here showed their support for Iraq, a fellow Islamic nation.

Gen. Beg, 59, is due to retire in August and a military source has said the chief of staff has no intentions of seeking to prolong his service. A diplomat however said the general may be expecting the civilian leadership to ask him to stay on.

Rumors of a possible coup circulated here some 10 days after the mid-January outbreak of fighting in the Gulf and followed Gen. Beg's speech critical of the U.S.-led bombing campaign. The speech came as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was defending Pakistan's dispatch of troops to join coalition forces in Saudi Arabia.

A month earlier, when Washington and Baghdad had been locked in a diplomatic two-step, Gen. Beg had paid tribute to Mr. Husayn's "strategic defiance" and had rejected any U.S. dictum on Pakistan's nuclear program. It is not the first time that the nuclear issue has come between the two traditional allies. In the 1970s, bilateral relations fell to a low point as Washington spearheaded an international campaign to head off the development of an "Islamic bomb." Pakistan regularly reiterates that its program is for peaceful applications and has said it was willing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation treaty if India follows suit.

Referring to the dispute, a top Western diplomat said that for Pakistan "it's a form of national identity, a sign of power."

Washington clearly wants to extricate itself from Pakistan after a decade of costly cooperation in fighting the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan. But U.S. leaders do not rule out a nuclear arrangement with Pakistan's civilian leadership and with "certain superior officers" that better takes into account U.S. concerns, the Western diplomat said. But in either case, the golden age of U.S.-Pakistan cooperation is finished, diplomats said.

Bhutto Claims Repression, Predicts Military Rule

BK1403120691 Hong Kong AFP in English 1147 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Islamabad, March 14 (AFP)—Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was brutally suppressing the opposition and paving the way for a return to military rule in Pakistan, former prime minister Benazir Bhutto charged Thursday. "Basic human rights no longer exist in the country," the opposition leader said at a press conference.

Ms. Bhutto, whose comments came as Pakistan voted for about 40 Senate seats, said the government was using "illegal" tactics to stop the opposition from taking even a "paltry" number of seats. She accused the government of kidnapping opposition deputies, torturing opponents, encouraging corruption and persecuting opposition leaders—including herself—with "false" and "trumped up" criminal charges. Ms. Bhutto was dismissed as prime minister last year by President Ghulam Ishaq Kahn and charged with corruption and abuse of power, while her husband Asif Ali Zardari could receive the death penalty if convicted on charges of kidnapping and murder. Other key opposition figures, including the former chief minister of Sindh Province, Qaim Ali Shak, also face criminal charges.

Ms. Bhutto told reporters that 45 National Assembly members belonging to her People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) are ready to quit the assembly in protest, and have already handed her their resignation letters. The ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance government is becoming "more revengeful" with each passing day, and "Nawaz Sharif is doing enough to invite martial law," Ms. Bhutto said. "We cannot take it lying down," Ms. Bhutto said of the alleged repression. Asked if her party intends to organize street demonstrations, Ms. Bhutto replied that she is negotiating to build a more broad-based opposition.

Ms. Bhutto said she tried to create a working relationship with the government after it took power last November. She said she acted responsibly and had declined to exploit widespread anti-government, pro-Iraq sentiment during the Gulf war. But, Ms. Bhutto added, the government was determined to crush her party and deepen a "national crisis" to create instability in Pakistan.

Pragmatic Policies Seen To Influence U.S. Ties

BK1403164691 Islamabad Domestic Service in English 1600 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Liberal economic and industrial policies adopted by the government have strengthened the country's position towards achieving the goal of self-reliant economy. Informed sources told APP [ASSOCIATED PRESS OF PAKISTAN] in Islamabad today that firm stand pursued by the prime minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, on the Gulf crisis also gave fillip to the country's principled position in the comity of nations. These sources said the pragmatic approach adopted by the government was likely to yield positive results at the U.S.-Pakistan Economic Commission meeting in Washington. The commission is to consider a request for renewing American aid to Pakistan.

Sharif's Party Wins Majority in Senate Election

BK1403163091 Hong Kong AFP in English 1620 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Islamabad, March 14 (AFP)—The ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI) of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif scored a clear-cut victory in elections to 42 seats of the 87-member Pakistani Senate Thursday, unofficial results showed. IJI and allied parties captured 30 seats while former premier Benazir Bhutto's Peoples Democratic Alliance (PDA) bagged just five, three of them from her home province Sindh. The results mean continued IJI dominance of the upper house. In the National Assembly the IJI has a majority of more than two-thirds.

The supporters of Jam Sadiq Ali and the Muhajir Qaumi Movement (MQM), both allies of Mr. Sharif, bagged five and two seats respectively out of 10 contested in Sindh.

IJI won three seats in Balochistan, five from North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and all 10 seats in Punjab, Mr. Sharif's stronghold. The coalition also claimed the two senate seats from capital Islamabad.

The pro-Moscow Awami National Party (ANP), another IJI ally, got three seats from NWFP. Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP) of Nawab Akbar Bugti, an influtenial tribal chief in Balochistan and a former provincial governor, won three seats from Balochistan. Fringe parties and independents secured four seats.

The PDA's Yahya Bakhtiar, a former attorney general, was elected to the senate from Balochistan. President Ghulam Ishaq Khan's son-in-law, Anwar Saifullah Khan, was elected from NWFP on the IJI ticket.

A former chief minister of Sindh, Syed Ghous Ali, who was believed to be backed by Mr. Sharif, lost in Sindh. He had been tipped as a prospective future Senate chairman to give representation to Sindh in the top offices at the federal level.

Pakistan's president and speaker of the National Assembly are from NWFP and the prime minister and chairman of the Senate are from Punjab.

FPCCI Chief Said Involved in Drug Trade

BK1403160591 Hong Kong AFP in English 1444 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Karachi, March 14 (AFP)—Raja Abdul Rehman, president of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), is facing investigation for his alleged involvement in illicit narcotics trade, excise police sources said here Thursday.

Mr. Rehman was interrogated by three officials of the Sindh Province Excise and Taxation Department Tuesday in connection with the seizure of 3.2 tonnes of contraband hashish from a five-acre (12.5 hectare) vacant industrial plot owned by him. He denied any knowledge of drugs on his property, but provincial minister for excise and taxation Liaquat Jatoi said, "The owner (of the plot) cannot escape the responsibility." Mr. Jatoi added that he would not hesitate to take action against any person, "however powerful and influential he might be." The government is determined "to crush with an iron hand all drug pushers and criminals," the minister added.

Excise police officials said Mr. Rehman might be charged with abetting the illegal drug trade. The FPCCI chief countered that he was being involved in the drug case "at the behest of the Americans." Earlier this month the United States criticized Pakistan's inefficiency in dealing with drug traffickers, some of whom are members of the ruling class.

Wednesday, Federal Minister for Narcotics Control Rana Chandar Singh announced the arrest of an influential Balochistan Province official, Ali Jan Notezai, allegedly involved in trafficking an unprecedented 1,743 kilograms (3,835 pounds) of heroin seized last October.

Sri Lanka

New Cabinet Listed Following 14 Mar Reshuffle

BK1503001291 Hong Kong AFP in English 1751 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Colombo, March 14 (AFP)—The following is Sri Lanka's cabinet after Thursday's reshuffle announced by President Ranasinghe Premadasa.

Ranasinghe Premadasa: president, minister of Buddha Sasana, policy planning and implementation, and defence
D.B. Wijetunga: prime minister and minister of finance
T. Wijayapala Mendis: transport and highways
A.C.S. Hameed: justice
M. Vincent Perera: environment and parliamentary
Lalith Athulathmudali: education and higher education
Festus Perera: public administration, provincial councils and home affairs
S. Thondaman: tourism and rural industrial development
Ranil Wickremasinghe: industries, science and technology
P. Dayaratne: reconstruction, rehabilitation and social welfare
Joseph Michael Perera: fisheries and aquatic resources
W.J.M. Lokubandara: cultural affairs and information
Alick Aluvihare: ports and shipping
C. Nanda Mathew: youth affairs and sports
A.R. Munsoor: trade and commerce
U.B. Wijekoon: handlooms and textile industries
Renuka Herath: health and women's affairs
A.M.S. Adhikari: posts and telecommunications
Sirisena Cooray: housing and construction
Rupasena Karunatilleke: plantation industries
K.D.M.C. Bandara: power and energy
Harold Herat: foreign affairs
Weerasinghe Mallimarachchi: food and cooperatives
R.M. Dharmadasa Banda: agricultural development and research
G.M. Premachandra: labour and vocational training

Investigators Conclude LTTE Killed Wijeratne

BK1503122691 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Investigators have concluded that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] killed General Ranjan Wijeratne, Defense Secretary Gen. Cyril Ranatunge told the news conference in Colombo yesterday that the investigators had ruled out other suspects. Cabinet spokesman Ranil Wickremasinghe said that the LTTE would not admit killing Gen. Wijeratne because if they did, the government could take action against them under international law.

Gen. Ranatunge, briefing newsmen on the situation in the North and East, said that in confrontation on Wednesday at northwest of Pandi Kulam in a place called Katragama, Chinnakkulam, eight LTTE cadres were killed and 31 injured. The security forces have destroyed a large number of bunkers and ousted the LTTE from their hideouts. This was confirmed by the LTTE. Security forces lost four of their soldiers. He added that scheduled operations were being carried out at Elephant Pass, Palali, Mawaddipuram, and Kankesanturai areas. (?Sea) operations which commenced on the 6th of this month were successfully conducted and four LTTE boats were destroyed. The defense forces have decided not to move the refugees out of the Madhu Church area following a lengthy discussion with the NGO's [nongovernment organizations], including the UNHCR [United Nations High Commission for Refugees]. Meanwhile, the NGO's and the church authorities have been requested to keep the refugees within the church area.

In reply to a question, Gen. Cyril Ranatunge said that operations around the Madhu areas would be carried out as planned. He also said that the LTTE had blown up a railway bridge in the Batticaloa area yesterday, details of which were not known. Gen. Ranatunge categorically stated that there was no truth whatsoever of the LTTE's massive campaign throughout the world that the Sri Lanka Government was denying education to the Tamil children in the North and East. He detailed the measures taken by the government to provide educational facilities to these children. He also said that there were no secret killing squads of the Sri Lankan security forces. The presidential adviser on international affairs, Bradman Weerakoon, and state secretary to the minister of state for defense, Air Chief Marshal Walter Fernando, were present at the news conference.

1990 Tea Exports Surpass India's Output

BK1403155791 Colombo International Service in English 1045 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Sri Lanka exported 215.3 million kilos of tea last year to become the largest exporter, pushing India into second place. A leading Colombo tea broking firm said Indian exports dropped to 199.6 million kilos last year. Both countries have been competing in their tea exports, although India traditionally exported slightly more than Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan tea exports last year earned 19.79 billion rupees.